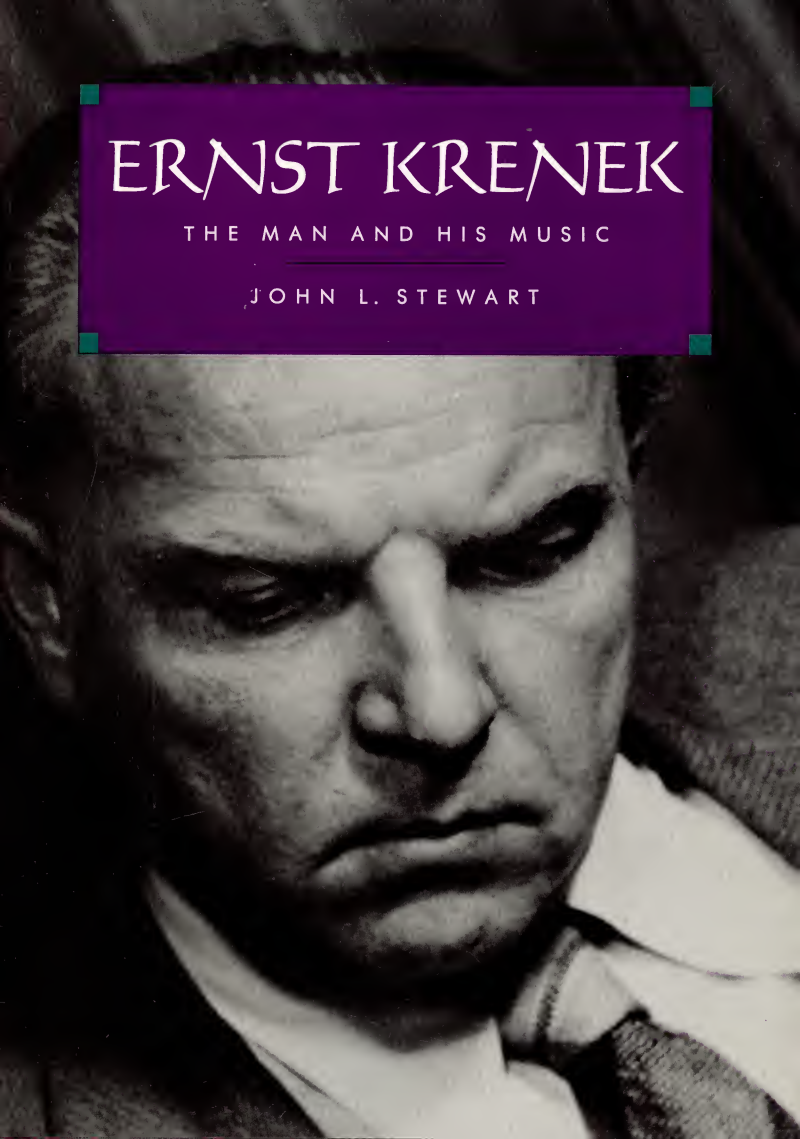


ERNST KRENEK

THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC

JOHN L. STEWART



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When Ernst Krenek's opera *Jonny spielt auf* (Jonny plays on) opened in Leipzig in 1927, it became an instant and spectacular success. It was soon performed in over a hundred cities and translated into a dozen languages. Both thrilling and scandalizing audiences with its use of jazz, its startling stage effects, its sexual frankness, and its portrayal of a black jazz violinist as the quintessence of freedom, it became the most popular opera of this century. And Austrian-born Krenek, easily one of this century's most prolific major composers, became a wealthy man.

Ten years later, however, he found himself a destitute refugee, fleeing to the United States as Hitler's troops invaded Austria. His work, always avant-garde, had become increasingly political; Hitler banned it and labeled Krenek a "cultural Bolshevik." Krenek endured long periods of hardship and neglect before his music, much admired by such colleagues as Stravinsky and Alban Berg but strange to American ears, was rediscovered by Europeans after the war. Eventually it brought him financial security and many honors, including the Gold Medal of Vienna and the Cross of Austria, and it has been celebrated by festivals in Vienna, Salzburg, Berlin, and other cities.

Krenek, who in 1945 became an American citizen, has been as experimental and broad-ranging in his compositions as he has been prolific. His 240 musical works include 20 operas as well as symphonies, piano concertos, string quartets and other chamber music, choral pieces, song cycles, and sonatas for various instruments. They brilliantly illustrate the principal musical trends of the century: Neoromantic tonality, Neoclassicism, free atonality, the twelve-tone technique, integral serialism, and electronic music. An accomplished teacher and writer as

ERNST KRENEK

This One



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JOHN L. STEWART

ERNST KRENEK

The Man and His Music

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For Ruth

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P R E F A C E

This book is the result of my admiration for Ernst Krenek and his music. I first heard of both while still an undergraduate. One of my teachers had spent a sabbatical year in Vienna and liked to tell us about Arnold Schönberg, Alban Berg, and Ernst Krenek. He illustrated his accounts by playing snatches of their music. (Like Krenek himself, he could give one a sense of a whole opera using just a piano and his own unoperatic voice.) He made the very names of these men exciting and alluring. Thus, when I was asked in the late forties if I would like to meet Krenek—who I had not known was even in the United States—I said that indeed I would. He and Berta, his second wife, were living in the Los Angeles home of an acquaintance of mine, and there we took part in social gatherings and engaged in a number of conversations. Having, as it were, rediscovered him, I attended concerts of his music and a series of lectures that he gave on such topics as the music of Anton Webern and the notebooks of Beethoven. Our friendship prospered. But soon I left Southern California, and we saw little of each other until I returned there in 1964, whereupon we began to meet frequently. In 1971 I decided to write a book about him and his music, and Krenek generously agreed to make his papers available and to let me interview him as often as was needed.

It was understood from the outset that I would be writing for the general reader and not for specialists. I wanted to make Krenek, his music, and his writings on many topics better known to a wide audience of persons interested in the fine arts. I decided that in addressing them I would not engage in close technical analyses of musical works, though I later found that some analyses and illustrative excerpts were needed in the discussions of twelve-tone and serial music. I also decided to include only as much about social and political movements and events as would be required for an understanding of the environments in which Krenek lived and worked and how they affected his thought and art. This, to be sure, proved to be a considerable amount, but it did not entail, for example, extended treatments of Austrian intellectual history and ideology. Similarly, figures such as T.W. Adorno and Karl Kraus would be considered in terms of their relations with and effect on Krenek, but no attempt would be made to offer a truly comprehensive description of their larger roles in Central European culture. This book is not, therefore, an exercise in musicology or intellectual history in any strict sense, though I hope that musicologists and historians will find here much of use when they undertake the studies that Krenek's life and music eminently merit.

My greatest debt is to Krenek and to his wife, Gladys Nordenstrom Krenek. Without their patient and unstinting help, this book would have been impossible. In fairness to them I must point out that I alone am responsible for the opinions put forward: except for quotations and obvious paraphrases, the “voice” addressing the reader is my own. The Kreneks, I know, would take exception to some of the things this voice has to say—which is but one indication of the wholly free hand I was allowed to exercise.

After the Kreneks I owe most to my good friend, the Viennese music writer, editor, and biographer Friedrich Saathen, who shared with me materials relating to Krenek that he had accumulated over many years, including his invaluable notes on conversations with the composer’s mother. Garrett Bowles, music librarian at the University of California, San Diego, and custodian of its Ernst Krenek Archive, made my work much easier by letting me use an early draft of his *Ernst Krenek: A Bio-Bibliography* (1989) and by passing on to me information uncovered in the course of his own research. Claudia Maurer Zenck, whose *Ernst Krenek, ein Komponist in Exil* (1980) was the first major study of Krenek’s music, helped me obtain materials from Austria and West Germany and, in over a decade of friendship and support, offered many fruitful suggestions. Ernst Hilmar and the staff of the Music Library of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek gave me much assistance as I made my way through the vast accumulation of Krenek papers under their care. Composers Robert Erickson, Wilbur Ogdon, and Beverly Grisgby, all of whom studied under Krenek when young and have since followed his music closely, shared recollections with me and offered insights that enriched my accounts of the music and the imagination that created it. Two remarkable women helped to give the accounts much of whatever color they possess: the late Anna Mahler recalled with infectious amusement what it was like to be young geniuses in Berlin during the early twenties; the late Beverly Bolton often reminded me with whimsical irony that I should remember to address myself to an audience of which she would have been a foremost member. The opera and lieder singer Joanne Regenhardt pointed out features of Krenek’s vocal music as perceived by a performer. Trudy LaDue, for many years my cherished administrative assistant and a fine musician in her own right, made it possible for me to find time for research and writing in the midst of the innumerable demands on a university officer and gave cheerful encouragement on the days when the demands seemed overwhelming. Angela Sanders patiently bore the burden of many clerical duties. Anne Geissman Canright, serving as copy editor, rescued me from embarrassing errors and greatly improved my prose. She, certainly, knows how great is my indebtedness to her. My wife, Ruth, who shared many of the talks with the Kreneks, helped me to a better understanding of what was said than I could have reached on my own. Finally, the Committee on Research at the University of California, San Diego, provided funds that enabled me to work in Vienna, Graz, Darmstadt, and Washington, D.C.

Sources of materials quoted in the text are given in the endnotes. However, the following deserve special mention for granting permission to use materials to which they hold the rights: Robert Erickson, for excerpts from his unpublished memoirs; Francis D. Fergusson, president of Vassar College, for excerpts from letters of George Sherman Dickinson and Henry Noble McCracken to Krenek; Michael Hamburger, Litt. D. (h.c.), for his translation of Hölderlin's "Hälfte des Lebens"; Ernst Hilmar, head of the music collection of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, for one page from the holograph of Krenek's *Sestina*; Lorna Kolisch, for an excerpt from a letter from the late Rudolf Kolisch to Krenek; Robert Kraft, for an excerpt from a letter he wrote to Paul Fromm that mentions Krenek; the Estate of Dimitri Mitropoulos, for excerpts from his letters to Krenek; Adlai E. Stevenson, for excerpts from a letter from the late Adlai Stevenson to Krenek; and Universal Edition, for excerpts from the music of *Karl V*.

Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

PROLOGUE

I am to wander on and on.

Krenek, *The Ballad of the Railroads*

On New Year's Eve 1927, a rather plump young man in evening dress sat with friends in a café across the street from the stage door of the Vienna Opera House. From time to time, with impatient, finicky movements, he would take a sip of coffee or light one of the expensive Turkish cigarettes that he favored. Otherwise he gave no sign of apprehension.

Ernst Krenek, affluent and famous, was back in his native city, which he had left seven years earlier as a nearly penniless music student. He was waiting not to celebrate the start of 1928 but to meet a page from the Opera House who would tell him it was time to appear for curtain calls. His opera, *Jonny spielt auf* (Jonny plays on), had opened that night in place of *Die Fledermaus*, which by long-standing custom was presented on New Year's Eve. Krenek had no desire to see his opera, having attended many performances in other cities. He knew from rehearsals that this was a satisfactory production, but he wondered what the conservative Viennese, who mistrusted modernism and disapproved of jazz, satirical revues, experimental stage sets, and sexual freedom, would make of this ostentatiously modern work, which glamorized such goings-on.

Elsewhere *Jonny* had been an instant success, from the moment it opened in Leipzig nearly a year earlier. Even the old-fashioned Viennese were not going to miss a chance to see a sensational work that was the talk of the continent, and ticket sales had been brisk. But two things worried Krenek. The audience, bemused by stage effects that included bringing on a locomotive and scandalized by the image of a black jazz violinist as the apotheosis of freedom, would probably fail, as other audiences had, to perceive the serious intent beneath the glittering surface. And Austrian sympathizers with Hitler's Brown Shirts might demonstrate with catcalls and stink bombs, as Nazis had in Germany, against depicting an American negro as

the lover of a white woman. Fastidious and somewhat timid despite the boldness of his imagination, Krenek abhorred facing such churlishness, even in the midst of tumultuous enthusiasm.

When the time came, he waited in the wings as the singer playing Jonny bestrode a great terrestrial globe and the chorus below him sang, "The old time goes, a new time begins now. Don't miss the glorious path into the unknown land of freedom." Gradually the music diminished until there remained only the slightly "blue" sound of Jonny's violin. Then the curtain came down, to an uproar of approval. As Krenek joined the cast before the curtain, then returned to take a solo bow, it was plain that he was Vienna's darling and his opera its heart's delight. Like Jonny he bestrode the world. With royalties pouring in, it seemed that for him a new time had indeed begun.

Within a decade, however, he had become a destitute exile, a wanderer among strangers who would have execrated his music had there been any chance for them to hear it. Despite the admiration of such discriminating judges as Igor Stravinsky, Anton Webern, Roger Sessions, and Dimitri Mitropoulos, despite high honors and his own unflagging efforts to gain a wider understanding and acceptance for his music, his fate has remained largely the same ever since. Endowed with exceptional intellectual power and almost extravagant musical ability, ever alert to new developments in his art, hoping to please but unable to compromise, he has followed his vocation through a lifetime that illustrates with unusual clarity the history of much twentieth-century music and the destiny of some of its most gifted creators. Why he has not received the full measure of recognition that is his due is a principal theme of this book.

1 · THE EARLY YEARS IN VIENNA: 1900–1919

Ernst Heinrich Krenek¹ was born on August 23, 1900, at the home of his parents on what was then the northwestern outskirts of Vienna. He was their only child.

His father, Ernst Josef Krenek, was a career officer in the commissary corps of the Imperial Austro-Hungarian Army with the rank of captain. The composer's grandfather, Josef Prokop Krenek, who had died shortly before the birth of Ernst Sr., had been an infantry sergeant in the same army. As the widow of a noncommissioned officer, Elisabeth Franziska Remeš Krenek was entitled to keep a tobacco shop in Prague, such shops being under state jurisdiction, and their son was educated in a military academy at the state's expense. An able and conscientious officer, the elder Ernst Krenek was frugal and conservative by temperament and glad that as a member of an administrative branch he was not obliged to maintain an aristocratic lifestyle (this was just as well, because his pay was meager).

In 1896, when he was thirty, he married Maria Čížek, the daughter of an army officer who later became a postmaster. She died two years later without having borne children. A little more than a year after her death he married her sister, Emanuela Josefa Auguste Čížek, a young woman fourteen years his junior. They soon moved into a new apartment at Argauergasse 3 in the Eighteenth District of Vienna. They were the first to occupy their suite of four rooms in a flimsy building thrown up to take advantage of a housing shortage and an interval of prosperity, and the composer's mother lived there until her death in 1972 at the age of ninety-two. By that time the building, which had stood on the edge of open fields, with a meandering brook that flooded the cellar in winter, had long since been surrounded by the spreading city.

It was a happy marriage. Husband and wife had both been born in Čáslav, in

what was then Bohemia. His family was entirely Czech, hers was half German. Although they used German in their home, he was proud of his Czech connections, spoke Czech easily, and faithfully read a Czech newspaper. During his summer furloughs they would journey to Josefstadt, in Bohemia, to visit Emanuela's younger sister, who had also married a career officer. When Ernst Jr. was still very small, his paternal grandmother, now in her seventies, came to live at Argauerasse, where she remained until her death in the spring of 1910. Since she knew no German, her grandson learned to speak Czech (which he can do to this day), but he never learned to read more than a few phrases. This knowledge was useful in speaking with the succession of Czech maids employed by the family, young girls who for the sake of coming to Vienna accepted tiny wages and slept on a cot in the kitchen. Their life was hard, not because the Kreneks were harsh employers but because there were few amenities to ease their labor (the apartment had no gas or electricity, and water had to be obtained from a tap on a landing in the hall) and the household had to get by on very little.

It might be supposed that with so many ties to Czechoslovakia the family would feel its roots were far away, but that was not the case. In fact, they were very conscious and proud of being Viennese and loyal to the emperor. The Imperial Army, which drew its officers and men from many nationalities, cleverly focused attention on itself and the imperial court by seeing that soldiers of all ranks were transferred every year or so and were rarely assigned posts in their native regions. The army itself was their nation, and for those fortunate enough to be assigned to headquarters, as Ernst Sr. had been, Vienna was their first love among the cities of the empire. This sentiment was shared by the few family acquaintances, also members of the middle-officer class, Catholic as a matter of course but without particular devoutness, conservative, and given to a quiet life. The elder Krenek was interested in ideas and the arts, and he read a great deal. This intellectual bent stood him in good stead, as did his early training and his methodical habits of mind, and for a time before the outbreak of war in 1914 he was posted to the faculty of a school for military administrators, where he was utterly happy with his teaching duties and his occasional research trips into the field.

Krenek's mother was a vivacious young woman rather more German than Czech in her thinking. Her own mother, born in Prague, was the daughter of an infantry officer from the Sudetenland. Though lively in her sympathies and opinions and liking to judge for herself, she nonetheless submitted to the officers' way of life, deferring to her older, somewhat grave husband. She, like him, directed her life inward toward the family and her son. For recreation she read, though she was not as interested in ideas for their own sake as her husband, and she played the piano (with "parlor politeness," her son recalls). Although in the area of music, too, her husband's understanding was more profound than her own, both enjoyed symphony concerts, to which they subscribed, and an occasional night at the nearby

Volksooper. In all they maintained a subdued but affectionate and cheerful household undisturbed by the turbulence of political agitations and international rivalries, and untouched by avant-garde music.

• • •

Vienna under Franz Joseph (1848–1916) is reminiscent of the American Old South before the Civil War. Both have been assiduously promoted in popular romances, musical comedies, and tourist literature as enchanted places inhabited by women of infinite charm and men whose aristocratic hauteur showed clearly in their contempt for commerce and intellectualism, things to be left to Jews or Yankees. What the mint julep and the gloriously silly novels of Thomas Nelson Page were to the Old South, Sacher torte and the operettas of Johann Strauss and Franz Lehár were to Old Vienna. Still, beneath the myths true resemblances hold. In both societies the wealth of the ruling class came from the labor of oppressed people, many of other ethnicities. Both felt threatened by burgeoning powers on their northern borders and, partly as a consequence, were militaristic, conservative, suspicious of ideas and innovations, and intolerant of serious social criticism and dissent. Both were obsessively concerned with the chastity of women while tolerating, even applauding, sexual adventure among men. Both paid lip service to culture and the arts but glorified the cavalry officer and made things difficult for genuinely creative spirits (Edgar Allan Poe and William Gilmore Simms, Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schönberg) in their midst. Both were easy marks for satirists (Mark Twain, Karl Kraus) who saw their hypocrisy and sham. And both were, at bottom, commercial, bourgeois, vulgar, and dull.

Revealing though it is, the analogy must not be pushed too far. For one thing, Vienna's aristocracy was genuine, though it had been seduced by middle-class materialism. And despite the city's shabby treatment of its serious composers during their lifetimes, Vienna's claim to being the musical capital of the world was rightful; though hostile to ideas, moreover, it had a core of impassioned intellectuals that included Ernst Mach, Sigmund Freud, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, three of the most original thinkers of the age. The Old South, in contrast, had not a single artist or musician of stature and, politics apart, no genuine man of ideas. Vienna may have matched the myths most closely just prior to and during the First World War, when those who could afford to (and some, particularly young army officers, who could not) lived with hectic frivolity in a confusion of gaudy dress uniforms, champagne, chorus girls, and idolatry of the emperor, much like characters in *The Merry Widow* and *The Gypsy Baron*. This behavior helped to lay the ground for a bitter postwar reaction against the whole imperial mystique and its traditions and values.

The Dual Monarchy over which Franz Joseph reigned so long had fifty million subjects by the beginning of the war. While the remarkable length of his reign suggests stability, his lands contained eleven ethnic groups, of which the principals

were the Germans, Magyars, Poles, Czechs, and Italians, all of whom had strong nationalist aspirations. Early on, then, the government was faced with the task of creating a modern political structure capable of containing so many people with mixed loyalties. After 1848, liberalism had utterly failed, and the emperor, supported by the Christian Socials (sometimes erroneously called in English-speaking countries the Christian Socialists), which was the party of the aristocrats, the business men who aspired to mingle with the gentry, and the farmers and peasants, devoted his efforts to avoiding all social and political change. Progress was associated with the aspirations of city workers, to whom concessions should be made grudgingly, and Jewish intellectuals, who simply were not received. With the unwavering support of the Catholic church, which had great influence in the Christian Social party, the monarchy maintained the status quo—at least superficially, and to some extent in substance—by its control of the army and by its right to suspend Parliament and rule by decree, even after universal suffrage was introduced in 1907. On the edges of the empire, however, trouble was gathering.

Vienna, a center of trade since the days of the Romans and now a center of manufacturing, grew fourfold under Franz Joseph as people moved in to take jobs in the new factories and enjoy the glitter of city life. Although some Viennese regarded themselves as progressives and there was an opposition Social Democratic party, the Christian Socials and the church controlled the city government until 1911. Working conditions were as poor as in most European cities, but housing conditions were worse because construction lagged so far behind the growth of the population: someone could always be found to live in the most squalid quarters. The hastily built and poorly equipped apartment into which Kreněk's parents had moved shortly before his birth was fairly typical of the dwellings of many middle-class Viennese families.

No matter how cramped and uncomfortable it might be, though, the home of a middle-class family was a refuge where a finer life could be cultivated without the intrusion of commerce. Denied any mingling with the hereditary nobility, the successful bourgeois according to Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin "proved that he was someone by devoting his free time to the arts as wholeheartedly as he did his working time to business. Viennese of the generation that reached maturity at the turn of the century were raised, indeed, in an atmosphere so saturated with, so devoted to, 'aesthetic' values that they were scarcely able to comprehend that any other values existed at all."² Their devotion to music (which certainly did not permit any countenancing of the madness of Schönberg's atonalism) was unquestionably a principal factor in making Vienna the city with the most public performances of music of the highest excellence.

As evidence, consider the roll call of major composers and conductors associated with Vienna from the early nineteenth century, when the bourgeoisie replaced the court and the nobility as the primary audience for art music, down to 1914: Beetho-

ven, Schubert, Brahms, Bruckner, Richard Strauss, Mahler, Felix Weingartner, Franz Schalk, Bruno Walter, and Franz Schreker. The sumptuous house of the Court Opera (since 1918 the Vienna State Opera), where Mahler conducted from 1897 until 1907 and Weingartner from 1907 until 1911, was completed in 1869. The Vienna Volksoper (People's Opera) opened in 1904. The Vienna Philharmonic, whose eight subscription concerts a year Krenek's parents attended, was formed from the Court Opera's orchestra in 1842. The Konzertvereinorchester (Concert Society Orchestra) was founded in 1900, and the Wiener Tonkünstlerorchester (Vienna Musical Artists' Orchestra) in 1907; in 1922 they joined forces as the Wiener Symphoniker (Vienna Symphony). There were two great music societies, each with its own superb concert and recital halls in the center of the city: the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Society of Friends of Music), established in 1813, and the Wiener Konzertverein (Vienna Concert Society), established in 1900. The former supported a huge chorus, founded in 1858, and yet another orchestra, formed in 1860; together they presented each year eight concerts known as the *Gesellschaftskonzerte* (society concerts). Their performances of Bach oratorios, though ponderous and romantic by modern tastes, were among the most anticipated musical occasions of any season. In addition to all these there were numerous string quartets and other chamber music groups, church choirs, and amateur ensembles of merit. Not even the most diligent concertgoer could hope to attend all of even the superior performances. Finally, for the many stay-at-homes who had pianos and could read music, music publishers and rental libraries offered large collections of keyboard works, symphonies arranged for four hands, and piano-vocal scores of operas, which enjoyed wide circulation (this at a time when musical Americans gathered around the family upright to sing minstrel show tunes or listen to their daughters ripple through the insipid works of Ethelbert Nevin).

Such, then, was the ambiguous city of Krenek's boyhood: a place where music was worshipped to the point of idolatry but its best living composers were scorned or neglected; where an aged and feeble monarch ruled mainly by ceremony and decree; where the ordinary citizen was anti-Semitic yet much of the press and many leading banks and business houses were controlled by Jews; where tumultuous change was taking place yet people by and large led tranquil lives and took continuity and stability for granted; where industrial workers endured miseries yet immigrants from the provinces continued to pour in to enjoy the "good life"; where some of the most original minds of the century were at work but had to wait until later for recognition, and then from abroad; where the populace believed flattering fairy tales about its unique high spiritedness and ineffable charm but for the most part was just as stodgy as any in Europe. Most ironically, it was also where the greatest number of accomplished young composers was to emerge and where the innovative music of this century was to be conceived. Krenek in later years explained how this could be:

What really pleases the average listener is not discovering something new, but recognizing something he has known for a long time. . . . To the public at large favorite pieces never grow stale, or only so slowly that the process does not keep pace with the "progress" claimed by composers. . . . The more stubbornly the wide public clings to traditional values, the more passionately modernists pursue progress, impatiently throwing on the junk heap the inventions that only a little while ago were considered the bold pointers of the future. . . . The tendency to disavow yesterday's advances, all of them "old-fashioned," has not the slightest influence on the mind of the public that composedly enjoys the work of the day before yesterday. As the official apparatus of music distribution is almost entirely geared to this public, most performances of new music take place in an atmosphere dominated by specialists. . . . These specialists do not go to an art-work for a total emotional experience; they are interested in the demonstration of new materials, new principles of composition, procedures, methods. The broader application of such achievements to a large number of subjects worth writing and presenting interests them less than the unique experimental demonstration of the invention. This creates a danger of a radicalization that will accelerate continuously.³

Though a modest and frugal man, Ernst Krenek, Sr., knew well what was expected of an officer. Thus in the fall of 1906 he chose not to send his son to a public school, even though the family's means were limited, but placed him instead in a private institution maintained nearby on Schopenhauerstrasse, in the area known as Wien-Wahring, by the Christian Brothers, who had established throughout the city a number of such schools for the sons of the upper middle class. Although the faculty was made up of lay brothers rather than priests, religious instruction was offered every day as a matter of course.

There was more to this decision than simply a father's sense of what befitted his station. Though conscientious and able in the performance of his duties, the elder Krenek did not conform to the stereotype of a professional military man. Quiet, scholarly, he would have fitted happily into the academic world, for he greatly enjoyed teaching and he wrote several excellent training and operational manuals. Despite his profession, he was a social idealist who hoped that nations would learn to live in comity and armies would eventually wither away. He and his son were close, and there was between them a quiet but profound sympathy of interests and outlook and an unwavering affection. Consequently, the son entirely lacked those feelings of hostility toward the father that were virtually pandemic among young intellectuals of his generation.

The father did not want his son to become an officer. Rather, he hoped that his son would attend a university and enter a career such as law or government service. When his son was eight, therefore, he sent him to study French at the nearby home of a Fräulein Stangelberger. Then, after five years with the Christian Brothers, Krenek was enrolled in the *Staatsgymnasium* (state preparatory school) on Klostergasse, where he remained for seven years. Unlike other *Oberschulen*, or high schools,

which provided training in science and technology, the *Gymnasium* provided a liberal education with special emphasis on classical literature; this qualified one to enter the venerable and prestigious University of Vienna, founded in 1365 and under the patronage of the emperor himself.

In keeping with her status as the daughter of an officer in the Imperial Army, Krenek's mother had been given piano lessons. Following her example, Krenek took lessons from a Brother Wilfried when he entered primary school. His parents thought only of seeing that he had an education appropriate to the family's position; it never crossed their minds that their child might become a composer.

Even as a young child Ernst, fascinated by the appearance of his mother's music, liked to cover pages with imitations of musical notes. After he had begun his piano lessons and learned what the notes signified, his "compositions" became grand indeed. There survives a collection of two-page sketches put down in 1908 and 1909 and bearing such titles as "The Fall of Venice in 1590," "Mars and Venice: Grand Grotesque in Five Acts, Opus 598," "Sea Storm: Symphonic Tone Painting in Five Acts," "The Mill: Grand Opera in Five Acts," and "Missa Solemnis in D Minor." The boy's predilection for five *acts* may owe something to the fact that in 1904 the Volksoper had opened as a private theater just a ten-minute walk from the Kreneks' home; there the family went during the Christmas season of 1909 to see *Peterchens Mondfahrt* (Little Peter's journey to the moon), an operetta for children that Ernst Jr. thought was dreadful. With this start, the parents began to take him along to Sunday symphony concerts.

After four years Krenek outgrew Brother Wilfried, and in the fall of 1910 he began taking lessons at home from Fridolin Balluff, a teacher at the Kaiser Music School. To widen his pupil's musical horizons, Balluff often took him to the Votivkirche, a large Neogothic church situated on the northwest corner of the Ring, to hear organ music, played four-hand transcriptions of Mahler symphonies with him, and taught him a little about triad harmony and counterpoint. Now instead of scribbling random marks and ostentatious titles the boy could compose his first real work, a little song with piano accompaniment for his mother's thirty-first birthday in February 1911. This was followed in May by three waltzes for piano, which he labeled "Op. 2."⁴

By 1912 Krenek had progressed enough to be able to play piano transcriptions of operas, which he borrowed from rental libraries. His father turned pages for him, and although he was a reserved man and rarely spoke during these moments, he made clear to his son how keen was his appreciation. In this way Krenek became a phenomenal sight reader. His acquaintance with opera was deepened when with Balluff he analyzed Weber's *Der Freischütz* note by note and then attended a performance at the Volksoper; this was his first experience with live opera, and he listened with great excitement. Thereafter his parents allowed him to attend other productions at this theater, which at the time boasted fine singers and an excellent orchestra

and was not afraid to present works too daring for the Court Opera downtown. Under the direction of Rainer Simons it offered the first Viennese production of Richard Strauss's *Salomé* and one of the earliest stagings outside Bayreuth of Wagner's *Parsifal*. Family friends were shocked to learn that the Kreneks had taken their son to see *Lohengrin*, the music of which was considered so modern as to endanger a small boy.

Endangered or not, Krenek was inspired by Wagner and Strauss to plan an opera on an Egyptian theme, but matters got no further than an elaborate title page. Things went better with *Einsame Rose* (Lonely rose), a song for baritone and piano that he composed in the summer of 1913 and dedicated to a teacher whom he admired. That year he also attempted to compose a symphonic mass using material taken from Bach's B Minor Mass. Though the project did not get far, it suggests that the pernicious influence of *Lohengrin* may have been offset by the music Krenek heard at the Votivkirche. It is interesting that he was thinking this early in terms of the genres—songs, piano music, symphonies, and operas—with which he would make his mark.

As the only child of a father of retiring nature, grave demeanor, and rather elevated interests and a mother who deferred to her husband in all matters of taste and manners, Krenek was growing up in a solemn environment and adopting an essentially adult life-style. But all that changed during the summer, when it was the family's custom to visit Frau Krenek's younger sister, Elisabeth Raab, her husband, Heinrich (who was the boy's godfather and gave him his middle name), and Frau Krenek's father and mother, Gustav Albert and Anna Schmidt Čížek, who lived with the Raabs until their deaths in 1912 and 1911, respectively. These visits took them to Josefstadt and Leitmeritz in Bohemia, where Heinrich Raab, also an army officer, was stationed. Although his parents did not feel strong regional ties, despite the elder Krenek's continued fluency in Czech, young Ernst was impressed by the country of his parents' past, especially by the strength of traditions that reached back through generations and gave one a sense of identity with a group and participation in its history. He was even more taken, however, with the beauty of the Tirolean Alps after the Raabs moved to Mühlau, a suburb of Innsbruck. The Kreneks, traveling by slow train, which delighted the boy, continued to visit them there, sometimes for as long as two and a half months while Captain Krenek did his summer military duty and field research for the classes he taught. The Raabs were a noisy, opinionated, argumentative family, and Ernst's cousins, Elisabeth and Friedrich ("Fritz"), were just the sort of energetic and outspoken companions he needed. He had a wonderful time with them.

The impressions formed during these boyhood journeys were to have a deep influence. Krenek acquired early on a love of travel, particularly in mountains. (It was no accident that *Jonny spielt auf* begins with two vacationers meeting on a mountain path.) At the same time, the enforced wandering he would later experi-

ence was oppressive for one who had also developed a strong sense of belonging to a place and its past. Krenek's intense yearning for rootedness was to be of fundamental significance for his thought and art.

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On July 28, 1914, to the surprise and disappointment of Krenek's father, who had not thought that national leaders could be so foolish, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Three days later a general mobilization called Krenek's father away for the duration of the war. On August 10, after France, England, Russia, and Germany had entered the hostilities, Franz Joseph's army invaded Poland. At first things went well, but in September the invaders were severely beaten in Galicia and forced to withdraw to the Carpathian Mountains; there they engaged in an indecisive seesaw with the Russians that lasted until 1917, when the collapse of the czar's forces enabled the Austrian-Hungarian forces to join the Germans and defeat the Italians at Caporetto.

Hard times came quickly to Vienna, but the Krenek household fared better than most because of the father's position. Having administrative duties connected with supplies, he was not involved in combat and was stationed far behind the front at Lemberg, southeast of Krakow. His wife and son visited him there during the Christmas season of 1915. During the previous summer Ernst had joined the Geilhofers, close family friends whose son was his schoolmate, on an exhausting two-week hike through the gorge of the Inns River in the rugged mountains of the Tirol. The next summer, Frau Krenek and young Ernst visited his father at Teschen, on what is now the border of Poland and Czechoslovakia; and in the summer of 1917 they journeyed to Bad Vöslau, a spa about twenty-five miles from Vienna, where the army's general headquarters, to which the senior Krenek was attached, had been set up. Hardships of the war did not afflict the Kreneks until later.

Much as he liked mountain scenery and later would enjoy many a leisurely hike in the Tirol, a trip as strenuous as the one with the Geilhofers did not appeal to Ernst. Unusually energetic mentally, he was inclined to be sluggish physically. He took no interest in sports, having tried soccer and found it too rough. He preferred spending his time indoors among books; in fact, during his middle teens he was far more interested in literature than in music. At the *Gymnasium* he formed a close friendship with Gerd Hans Goering, a Protestant youth of his own age from Leipzig, who was thinking of making a career of writing. With two others they formed a clique that met regularly at the home of Goering's grandmother, with whom the boy lived, to discuss what they had been reading, much of which was sentimental fiction. They were titillated by Otto Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Sex and character), which, when it was published in 1903, had created a great scandal with its open descriptions of sexual desire in women and even more with its series of paradoxes arguing that all human achievement comes from a masculine principle

that must overcome a feminine principle lusting after chaos and destruction. To maintain order and accomplish anything, Weininger claimed, men must free themselves from the innate depravity of women.

When it appeared the book fitted well with the mood of many Viennese writers and artists under the spell of fin de siècle mystical eroticism and the image of the Eternal Feminine (*das Ewig-weibliche*),* apotheosized in the languors and lilies of the *Jugendstil* and the poetry and drama of Expressionism. In an essay on Alban Berg's opera *Lulu* published in 1937, Krenek traced this fascination from Goethe's *Faust, Part II*, through Wagner, Strauss, Schönberg, Frank Wedekind, Arthur Schnitzler, and Karl Kraus. Kraus, who was to have a seminal influence on Krenek's creative imagination, admired Weininger's book and concurred with its thesis that women are the incarnation of emotion, irrationality, and sexuality; but he rejected the conclusion that women are consequently wanton and nihilistic, for he believed to the contrary that since the emotion is the source of inspiration and creativity, in women is found the origin of all that is civilizing.⁵

Weininger had become an instant cult hero among young artists and writers when he committed suicide in 1903 at the age of twenty-three, in the very house where Beethoven had died. It was thus inevitable that Krenek and his friends would read his book. This was steamy stuff for well-bred teenagers, for it implied a furtive and deliciously decadent connection between sex and the reading and writing of poetry, at which they were trying their hands. Yet for all the clandestine excitement, the book had little direct effect on Krenek, other than preparing him for Kraus's views, with which, as the libretti Krenek wrote for his operas make clear, he strongly agreed.

What did affect Krenek, in ways not easy to measure but certainly there, were the intellectual environment of Vienna and the manner in which women were represented in paintings, plays, and music dramas, on which Weininger's mark was indelible. For the moment, the hothouse atmosphere surrounding the little clique did encourage Krenek in what he later called "dilettantism" and in writing verse, especially during the summer of 1917 while he was at Bad Vöslau. At thirteen he had tried prose and produced a few issues of a weekly satirical journal that he called *Der Skorpion*, in which he commented on the news of the day in the manner of the widely read *Muskete* and *Simplicissimus*. Although the paper carried a bold name, Krenek was too shy to show it to anyone but Eduard Geisler, an officer in the same army branch as his father.

The poetry he was now trying did not go far, except for large sections of a masque called "Lebenslied" (Song of life), to which he devoted many hours at Bad Vöslau.

**Das Ewig-weibliche* is not easily rendered in English. Most dictionaries give "the Eternal Feminine," but this connotes a degree of daintiness or delicacy not intended by the original. "The Eternal Female" goes to the other extreme and connotes a physicality approaching coarseness. Neither really captures the palpitating sexuality that the term has acquired from use in fiction, drama, and operas, especially since the appearance of Weininger's book.

It was supposed to have two parts, but only the second, which fills 138 notebook pages, was completed; the first remained in outline. The war was now in a stalemate, and a yearning to be done with it was becoming widespread. Krenek dedicated his masque to God and opened it with a prayer for peace. In the partly sketched, partly versified drama that follows, God sees that war has gone on throughout human history and that now one side is going to conquer everything by inventing an artificial man. He decides to intervene, but not before the young poet surveys events from the raising of the Tower of Babel, through the destructions of Troy, Athens, and Rome, down to the attempts to establish democracy in Goethe's time. Throughout history, Krenek told the reader, the abiding issue has been the struggle for equality. To end this strife God sends an angel to the laboratory where the homunculus is being assembled, to bless it and make it capable of love but not hate. By means of this creation, equality and peace will have a chance to prevail.

As he worked on his masque Krenek was also developing a much grander affair in prose: a history of Athburg, a city-republic combining features of ancient Athens and modern Vienna, between 1867 and 1898. Begun in late 1916 or early 1917, this work, which was a conscious imitation of the *Bellum Catalinae* and *Historiae* of Sallust, the Roman general, politician, and friend of Julius Caesar, filled two notebooks. In addition, Krenek also prepared an outline entitled "Catalina Athburgensis, Erklärungen" (Athburgian conspiracy, depositions) concerning events supposed to have taken place in 1906; a table of eighty-one characters; an appendix that brought the account to 1913; a fragment describing the earliest days of Athburg when it was a ninth-century village in the midst of deep forests; five novelettes, as he termed them, containing brief narratives from various periods in the city's past; and, most interesting of all, a narrative in the first person entitled "Werdegang eines Kompositionsstudenten" (Development of a composition student), describing the aspirations and difficulties of a youthful would-be composer who came to Athburg in the 1880s to study at the "Symphony Academy." Krenek illustrated the history with skillful ink drawings showing the city, a ceremony at which the massed soldiery swore allegiance to the president, and even a rite at which medals were bestowed for gallantry in action, for Athburg was often at war with Sparburg, as Athens had been with Sparta. Much of the account, which included no less than five assassinations in the five years between 1894 and 1899, focused on the life of Arthur von Alkburg, who became president, was forced to flee the country, and was making his way back to Athburg when the narrative broke off.

In all it is a remarkable undertaking for a sixteen-year-old, and it reveals much about Krenek's imagination at the critical moment when he was beginning to study music seriously. It shows, for one thing, how much he was an officer's son, for the history is concerned mainly with wars and the political events leading up to them, the principal characters are ministers of state and military men, and Krenek is at pains to report when the officers were promoted and to what rank. On the other

hand, it shows not the least trace of Krenek's having read Weininger. The drawings and descriptive passages reflect Krenek's powerfully visual imagination, which was to be significant for his later travel essays and the texts he wrote for some of his finest songs. The only instruction in drawing he had had (and the only he was ever to have, though many years later he made a hobby of landscape watercolors with markedly graphic qualities) came in art lessons at the Christian Brothers school. He was an apt pupil.

Noteworthy, too, is the attention he devoted to the contrast between brutal, authoritarian Sparta and humane, cultured, democratic Athens. This contrast, with many analogues, was to be fundamental in his thought, his personal life, and his musical and literary works. It appears and reappears in songs and opera libretti and in the direction he chose for his travels, pairing a cold, inhuman North against a warm, hedonistic South; Prussia (which Krenek disliked) against Bavaria (which he liked and regarded as "Latinized"); Germany, especially under Hitler, against Austria; gloomy Central Europe against debonair France; and Europe as a whole against a fanciful America (a view that experience would later confute).

Perhaps most impressive of all is young Krenek's knowledge of the classics as exhibited in his meticulous imitation of Sallust. Krenek had attended a *Gymnasium* where the classics were predominant, and he had both a flair for languages and an exceptionally authoritative teacher. Dr. Karl Mras, who, as Krenek said later, "decisively formed my relation with the antique," was a harsh, arrogant man in his mid-forties given to treating his colleagues with contempt and terrorizing his pupils. (Some believed that he had once driven one to suicide.) He had published a few scholarly papers and served as the editor of a journal devoted to Greek studies, and he held a humble (but in the eyes of the *Gymnasium*, exalted) position as brevet docent at the University of Vienna, which entitled him to lecture there, not for a salary but for whatever fees he could collect from the students. Uncertain about his standing in the world of scholarship, he was probably a lonely and disappointed man. For whatever reason, he showed ferocious hostility toward those around him, frequently going into paroxysms of rage over small errors in pronunciation or syntax. Yet not toward Krenek, whom he regarded as unusually gifted in the study of Latin (though Krenek preferred Greek).

Conscientious and imaginative, Krenek loved to study languages and history. He was weak in science and mathematics, but his mediocre performance in these subjects did not trouble him or his parents, because he excelled in the subjects in which he must do well to be admitted to the university, where it was assumed he would go. In later years he became interested in both science and mathematics and regretted his poor background. Still, his fine training in Latin and Greek was to serve him all his life; indeed, his ability so impressed Stravinsky that in later years he made a practice of consulting Krenek about the Latin texts and titles he used for his own works.⁶

Anyone acquainted with Krenek at midadolescence might have supposed that if

he were not to enter government service or some academic field such as history he would become a writer. Then in 1916 something occurred that, though unrecognized as such at the time, was decisive for his becoming a composer. His piano teacher, who by now realized how remarkably talented his pupil was, decided that he had taught Krenek all that he could and urged the young man to go to someone more advanced. Schönberg, who was well regarded as a teacher even though his music was deplored, was not available, having been called up for military service late in 1915. However, the composer Franz Schreker, who also taught and was admired by many as the leader of progressive music in Vienna, was available. Because Krenek's parents could not afford private lessons under him, Krenek took the entrance examination of the Imperial Academy of Music and the Performing Arts in the fall of 1916 and was accepted as a member of a class in composition taught by Schreker, who was on the faculty. The timing is significant, for in joining Schreker's class Krenek was entering a new world just as his old world, the world of his military father and grandfathers, was collapsing. On October 21, the premier of Austria, Count Karl von Sturgkh, was assassinated by Friedrich Adler, son of the founder of the Austrian Social Democratic party; and on November 21, Franz Joseph died at the age of eighty-six. Although the war was not yet over, an era had ended.

Schreker was thirty-eight and just coming into his own as a composer. He had joined the academy in 1912, the year in which his most famous work, the opera *Der ferne Klang* (The faraway tone), for which he himself had written a hazily mystical libretto, was given its premiere with great success at Frankfurt. He was the founding director of the Vienna Philharmonic Choir, which introduced many contemporary works, and he received many invitations to conduct. His operas and ballet scores belonged to the tradition of *Tristan und Isolde*, the French Symbolists, *Salomé*, Schnitzler's dramas and novels, Weininger, and the fascination of contemporary Viennese artists with the obscurely perverse. Their music was luxuriously romantic and distinguished by skillful orchestration emphasizing timbres and pellucid sonorities that retained a degree of tonality. *Der ferne Klang* sounds in many respects like the works of Richard Strauss, but there are passages, especially those evoking the faraway tone, that might have been composed by Frederick Delius, whose music Schreker much admired. Krenek had never heard *Der ferne Klang* and knew it only by studying the piano-vocal reduction, but it made a great impression on him; he always regarded it as one of Schreker's best works in spite of its naive text. Later he attended other operas by Schreker and disliked them. He finally heard *Der ferne Klang* in 1981 and continued to give it approval, if limited.

Schreker, who never used his own music for examples, insisted on "originality and the avoidance of banality." Krenek recalled:

Schreker's attitude was characteristic of the general frame of mind known as *fin de siècle*. . . . Interest centered around unusual subject matter, pathological aspects and morbidity not excluded. The work of art was to be distinguished by unique strangeness and had to be free of straightforward, obvious, and popular elements.

While Schreker adhered to these general principles, his keen sense for the operatic stage, which was the main outlet for his creative abilities, put a brake on his somewhat naive philosophical vagaries. . . . In spite of the *recherché* character of some of Schreker's librettos, his music always contained an effective dose of Pucciniesque sweep, invigorating otherwise flabby basic substance mixed from ingredients of Wagner and Debussy.

Schreker's music had practically no contrapuntal texture. But as a teacher he was at his best in training his students in contrapuntal writing, for which, after the discipline of modal counterpoint was mastered, Bach and Max Reger served as preeminent models. The music which I as well as the other students wrote during these school years was accordingly fashioned in the spirit of post-romantic German polyphony, flavored with impressionistic devices of French and Italian origin.⁷

Krenek's classmates, almost all of whom were considerably older than he, constituted an unusual group. Even in peacetime it would have been remarkable that so many talented young men turned up in the same class, and during a war that had already destroyed many of their generation it would seem wholly improbable. Yet there they were: Felix Petyrek, at twenty-four the oldest and already an accomplished pianist who would become a composer and conductor of note; Alois Hába, to be, after Krenek, the most famous of the group by virtue of his composing with microtones; and such others, only a little less known for their composing and conducting, as Wilhelm Grosz, Karol Rathaus, Josef Rosenstock, Max Brand, Friedrich Wilckens, and Franz Salmhofer (who, like Krenek, was just sixteen). Earlier Paul Pisk had belonged to the group, and Jascha Horenstein joined it soon after Krenek.

It is not surprising that among such committed and ambitious young men, Krenek, whose unusual gifts soon showed, should have decided that he, too, should make composing his profession. But he was slow going about it, perhaps because he saw little of his classmates outside class hours. He still attended the *Gymnasium* from eight to one, going downtown to the academy for afternoon sessions that ran from four until six. Younger than the others and busy with school work, he did not sit around talking about music as a career and how to get ahead. Nonetheless, he gradually became infected with the desire for name and fame. But there were obstacles to be overcome.

In the spring of 1918, Krenek was called up for military duty, despite his father's strenuous efforts to have him deferred. He reported on March 15 and was posted to the Thirteenth Imperial-Royal Heavy Field Artillery Regiment. Because of his *Gymnasium* education and his father's status he was assigned for officers' training to the Kaiserebersdorf Barracks in Vienna but allowed to live at home. Each day he rode the tram to his military classes, yet his schedule was so light that he was able to continue taking instruction twice a week at the academy.

Although Russia had collapsed and the Italians had been routed at Caporetto, things were now going badly for Austria-Hungary—so badly, in fact, that a year before, Charles I, successor to Franz Joseph, had put out peace feelers, but to no

avail. The Allied blockade had brought food shortages and great hardships to civilians; nationalist groups within the empire, excited by the success of the Russian Revolution in the fall of 1917, were conspiring to set up their own governments and withdraw from the war; and in Vienna, workers went on long strikes early in 1918. The United States had entered the war the previous April but had been slow to move its troops into action. Thus the Germans began a great push on the western front just as Krenek entered the service. By midsummer the offensive had failed and the tide of war had turned in favor of the Allies, who launched their own last great drive late in September.

But all this was far removed from Krenek, who was a reluctant soldier and was seeking to remain as inconspicuous as possible to get by with a minimum of effort. He was bored with his training, which was so easy that although he made no effort to excel, he ranked thirtieth in a class of three hundred. To pass the time he read a great deal, some of it sentimental tales of imperiled chastity and miraculous religious conversions by such now deservedly forgotten figures as Paul Keller, Peter Rosegger, Rudolph Hans Bartsch, and Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti. And to ensure that his disaffection did not go unnoticed, on his tram rides Krenek made a point of conspicuously reading the heavily censored paper of the leftist Social Democrats, *Die Arbeiter Zeitung* (The workers' newspaper), and Karl Kraus's satirical antimilitarist periodical *Die Fackel* (The torch). During this period, too, he attended his first public reading (of *King Lear*) by Kraus, who was to become the strongest influence on his own writing, stronger even than the classics. By these means and his composing he endured the six months of training and in October 1918 was assigned, through his father's efforts, to the arsenal, where he registered and stored surplus arms. The work was so light that he was able to write music while on duty and, again as a deliberate show of disaffection, to read Henri Barbusse's bitter and revolutionary war novel *Das Feuer* (*Le feu*, later famous in English as *Under Fire*).

Meanwhile, the empire and the army were collapsing. On October 4, 1918, Austria-Hungary made unsuccessful overtures for a separate peace to President Wilson. A fortnight later, German Austrians set up a provisional government, and other nationals in the empire began to break away. On October 25, Charles I released the Hungarians from fealty to the House of Habsburg; on the 28th, the Czechs revolted; on the 29th, the Imperial Army fell apart, and some of the troops who had been severely beaten after initial victories in the Battle of Vittorio Veneto mutinied; on November 3, the Austrian government signed a separate peace at Padua. This was followed on November 11 by the armistice, and on the same day Charles I gave up all his powers. An Austrian Republic was declared the day after.

(While all this was going on, scarcely anyone noticed an event of great symbolic significance: on November 1, Schönberg founded in Vienna the Society for Private Performances. The name and the timing show vividly how far his kind of music was removed from the lives of ordinary citizens.)

With the coming of peace and the republic, the army was disbanded. After seven months as a soldier, Kreněk, now eighteen, was out of uniform. His fifty-two-year-old father was out of a job, without a pension, and even, because he had been an officer in the imperial forces, in some danger from the radicals who had helped to bring down the old government. He thought of claiming Czech citizenship to obtain an appointment in the newly formed Czech army, but as this would have made his son a Czech citizen as well and thus eligible for military service, he decided to cast his lot with Austria and remain in Vienna.

A period of great poverty and deprivation followed. With his administrative experience and knowledge of matériel, the elder Kreněk managed to obtain a poorly paying temporary job at an office in charge of liquidating the assets of the army and the emperor. To save fuel, the family lived in the kitchen. Since they were able to scrape along, Kreněk returned to the *Gymnasium* and, in March 1919, completed the work for his certificate. He was still living with his parents, still delighting Karl Mras with his love of the classics, still attending classes under Schreker, but the stable, almost private world he had known so long, even during wartime, had vanished.

Elsewhere the tumult amid the rubble continued. On January 5, 1919, the National Socialist (Nazi) Party was formed in Germany and the Spartacus (Communist) riots broke out in Berlin. On January 15, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, leaders of the Spartacus League, were murdered. In February, the Marxist Social Democrats won more seats in the new Austrian Parliament than the Christian Socials, who had the support of the Catholic church. Now, from the same city where the Habsburgs had reigned over more than fifty million people of many nationalities, Karl Renner, a moderate leftist, tried to govern six million people, most of them Germanic in background. Many wanted to unite with Germany, but on September 10, 1919, this possibility was ruled out by the Peace of St. Germain, which established the boundaries of the new republic. Simultaneously, Mussolini formed the Fascist party in Italy, and shortly after, a Soviet republic was proclaimed in Bavaria, only to be overthrown by rightist veterans less than a month later. On June 30, 1919, Germany signed the Versailles Treaty. On July 31, the Weimar Constitution was adopted, and within a fortnight the Weimar Republic was established. In Austria, things moved more slowly. Peace with the Allies was not ratified until October 17. During the following spring, the Christian Socials, capitalizing on resentments following defeat such as Hitler would exploit in Germany, gained control of the national government, which they would keep until the *Anschluss* in 1938. The municipal government of Vienna, however, remained in the hands of the Social Democrats.

Viennese in 1919 and 1920 were cold, hungry, bewildered, and angry. Unemployment was high, especially among returning veterans. Food and fuel were in short supply, and throughout the city there was profiteering and petty chicanery,

which nurtured suspicion and outrage. Citizens were divided by old enmities. Trade unionists decried the influence of officers of the church, who in turn regarded popular sovereignty as incompatible with Catholicism and stated in a pastoral letter of August 1918, "The gravest evil of our time is the feverish search for independence and free will. Modern man's desire to be fully independent is part of that false body of ideas . . . which threaten the foundations of social order heretofore based on the legal wisdom of the Christian tradition."⁸ A similar division pitted monarchists still loyal to the Habsburgs and supported by ex-officers, judges, and older civil servants against republicans. What remained of the bourgeoisie disliked and mistrusted liberal intellectuals, particularly those who were Jewish, as so many were. In the provinces, rightists formed the paramilitary Heimwehr and Frontkämpfer, ostensibly to keep border troubles in check. At first these sorts had no place in Viennese life, but the time would soon come when the Social Democrats would feel pressed to form a Republikanischer Schutzbund.

In the war's aftermath, the mood of Vienna resembled that of Berlin, Munich, and Frankfurt. Former army officers, who often had no other decent clothing, risked assault if they wore their uniforms. But on the whole, the influence of the church, the scarcity of truly militant Communists, and the reluctance of Austrians to push things to extremes forestalled for the moment the violence that afflicted German cities.

Young Viennese, especially those who had joined the army late or avoided military service altogether, were vehemently antimonarchistic and eager to obliterate the last reminders of the empire. Even before the war's end they had rejoiced in the news from Russia and looked forward to a revolution at home. On his return to the *Gymnasium*, Krenek rejoined the literary clique, but now, instead of Weininger and mildly decadent or piously sentimental fiction, he and his friends read Strindberg, Wedekind, the mordant Expressionists, and Kraus's unsparing *Die Fackel*, to which Krenek was particularly devoted. Student councils were formed in imitation of the Russian workers' councils, and at their meetings Krenek, now a thoroughgoing revolutionary in spirit, took part in recitals and public readings from radical literature.

But his zeal was superficial, the result of boredom and confusion over his own goals and prospects. When at last he received his certificate, it was too late in the academic year to enroll at the university. He had no job and nothing to fill his time but his studies with Schreker, which would soon end for the summer. He still intended to become a composer and worked at his music somewhat desultorily, meanwhile reading widely and talking rather fiercely for one of his decorous background. But there was a quality of bemusement about all he did. He had not really put his heart into anything.

By October nothing had changed, so, partly because it had been expected all along and partly to please his parents, he enrolled at the university. His study card

has survived and shows that he took “History of Philosophy: The Modern Age” with Adolph Stöhr (“a bore,” as he recalls); “Ancient Philosophy” with Robert Reininger; “Greek Philosophy of the Fifty Century B.C.” with Heinrich Gompertz, who made a deep impression on him; and two courses in music history, one on Bach with Wilhelm Fischer and “Psychological and Developmental Criteria of Musical Styles of Periods” with Robert Lach, whom Krenek judged a sham. The second semester he studied ethics with Stöhr, “Philosophy of Later Antiquity and the Middle Ages” with Reininger, “Basic Aspects of Cultural Philosophy” with Oskar Ewald, and an extension of the first-semester course on Greek philosophy with Gompertz. He continued to study music history with Fischer, moving from the old Classical to the Viennese Classical style. And although he did not formally enroll in the course, he attended lectures on the history of European art by Max Dvořák, which he thought very fine.⁹ On the whole, however, the year was not a success. He was still simply marking—and, he felt, wasting—time.

His composing was proceeding circumspectly. He now had four compositions—a double fugue and a first sonata for piano, a sonata for violin and piano, and a serenade for clarinet, violin, viola, and cello—which he thought warranted opus numbers. Excellent student pieces, they were nevertheless very temperate for a revolutionary and reader of Wedekind and *Die Fackel*. At center he was still very much the good son and conscientious scholar; despite all the commotion around him, he had changed little in the last five years. He needed to get away, to get on with growing out of adolescence into adulthood. Although their families and homes were utterly different, he much resembled Stephen Dedalus, the restless, shy, immensely gifted “artist as young man” portrayed by James Joyce. Like Stephen he confronted major tasks: leaving his home and achieving emotional and intellectual independence; developing a durable set of personal beliefs and values; forming a genuinely intimate relation with at least one other of his own age; identifying the commitments for which he was prepared to labor and sacrifice, persons with whom he shared them, and groups and institutions he would join to advance them. Finally, if he were truly to be a composer, he must begin taking the steps that would compel others to acknowledge this identity, to recognize him as a professional. This was a great deal for anyone who had lived such a sheltered life as he, who was somewhat passive and withdrawn, and who would have to go forth into a world where the guideposts were being pulled down or painted over. How and where should he start?

2 · THE YOUNG ATONALIST: 1920–1923

In the spring of 1920, Franz Schreker was invited to become the director of the Staatliche akademische Hochschule für Musik (National Academy of Music) in Berlin. At forty-two he was near the peak of his fame as composer, conductor, and acknowledged leader of the progressive wing of Viennese musicians. Acknowledged, that is, by the critics and the public, despite the presence of Schönberg, Berg, and Webern. (Schönberg, in fact, was then working on his *Five Piano Pieces*, op. 23, the last of which, completed in February 1923, was to be the first composition entirely organized by the twelve-tone technique.) Schreker's fifth opera, *Der Schatzgräber* (The treasure hunter), composed between 1915 and 1919 with a libretto by Schreker himself, had recently been premiered at Frankfurt to great acclaim, for his shimmering sonorities, unexpected but agreeable enharmonic shifts, and filmy eroticism were just daring enough for audiences titillated by Weininger, the plays of Schnitzler, and the paintings of Klimt. The academy, situated in Charlottenburg, a suburb in the west of Berlin that was an important educational and cultural center, was one of several state schools for the arts and the best of its kind in the German-speaking world, in Europe outshone only by the Conservatoire de Musique in Paris. It offered instruction in piano, the principal orchestral instruments, voice, choral music, conducting, and music history, but the core of the curriculum was composing and the allied subjects of orchestration and music theory. To be asked to head the academy was a mark of distinction. Schreker accepted and made ready to assume his duties in the autumn.

As part of his preparation he asked his best students—among them Felix Petyrek, Karol Rathaus, Alois Hába, and Ernst Krenek—to come with him. He wanted Krenek so much that he promised a remission of fees for the first term. This flattering invitation made Krenek decide to leave the university and commit himself once

and for all to composing, but not before his parents spent anxious hours debating the wisdom of his choice and particularly his going to Berlin. There was unrest and even occasional violence in Vienna, but these problems seemed small compared with the deadly turbulence afflicting Berlin. Moreover, it was plain that they would have to support their son, and they were impoverished. Nevertheless, after a walk in the Wienerwald one September afternoon they decided to back him, and shortly afterward his mother sold her jewels to raise money for his expenses. Promising to write often and to keep his expenditures to a minimum, Krenek set off at the end of September. Just twenty, he was leaving his parents for the first time except for short visits with relatives. It was wrenching for all of them.

The nation he was going to was but a little more than one year old. On July 31, 1919, one month after the signing of the Versailles Treaty, a group calling itself the German National Assembly, meeting in Weimar, adopted a constitution, and August 11 saw the establishment of the German Republic—to be known until its demise in 1933 as the Weimar Republic, even though its capital was Berlin. The disintegration of the German Empire had brought a struggle for power between the Spartacists, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who wanted a communist government on the Soviet model, and the Social Democrats, who wanted a parliamentary democracy and had a majority. The Weimar Constitution was designed to fend off both the communists and the surviving monarchists, but when fighting broke out between the Spartacists and the government, it was the monarchists and the paramilitary Freikorps who put down the revolution (after murdering Luxemburg and Liebknecht), thereby gaining power that the timid elected officials were never able to remove. By exploiting the resentment caused by the French seizure of Alsace-Lorraine, the occupation of the Ruhr, and reparations that had brought on extreme inflation, the rightists increased their popular support and persuaded the German people that the army had not been defeated in battle but had been stabbed in the back by communists and Jews. The light punishments the rightists received for the political murders they committed further emboldened them, and weakened the authority of the republic, which now teetered constantly on the edge of civil war. Peter Gay, the leading authority on the Weimar years, has put the matter succinctly:

There was some reason to think of the political life of the Republic as a spectacle, remote and slightly ludicrous. Parliamentary debates, with their legalism and their occasional vehemence, had a curious air of unreality about them: party hacks quibbled, orated, and insulted one another while millions were hungry. Politics seemed a game to which all must contribute but only politicians could win. Cabinet crisis followed cabinet crisis: in less than fifteen years of Weimar, there were seventeen governments.¹

It is understandable that the Kreneks were anxious for their son.

Yet as an aspiring composer he could hardly have gone to a better place, for

despite all the turmoil and bloodshed and the harrowing economic chaos wrought by inflation, the arts thrived under the Weimar government. Politicians, of all people, felt drawn to the archetypal antihero of Expressionist poetry and drama: the oversensitive, artistically gifted son of an overbearing businessman. They shared the Expressionist vision of universal peace in an Eden-like world utterly different from the Germany of the past. For militarists and business leaders, conversely, Expressionism, with its tendencies toward forlornness and self-hatred, its longing for flight and immolation, its preoccupation with hallucinations, madness, and suicide, only evoked a contempt for artists and intellectuals, which was reciprocated with ardor.

For all its latent and sometimes overt necrophilia, however, Expressionism inspired the poetry of Gottfried Benn, Franz Werfel, and Rainer Maria Rilke, the novels of Kafka, the plays of Wedekind and Georg Kaiser, the theater of Leopold Jessner, and created an environment conducive to Schönberg's *Erwartung* and *Pierrot lunaire*, Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, Berg's *Wozzeck*, and the paintings of Oskar Kokoschka, Emil Nolde, and Gustav Klimt. As these names show, Expressionism antedated the republic and was not confined to Germany. Its origins can be traced back through turn-of-the-century Austria to the Symbolists and their apotheosizing of the artist as outcast; to von Kleist and Goethe; and beyond them to Rousseau. To be sure, the purity of the Expressionists' status as outcasts was compromised by government sympathy and support, but they and their admirers *felt* that they were driven from the ordinary world and yearned to regress to a primitive, instinctual life. "There can be no doubt," writes Gay, "[that] the Weimar style was formed before the Weimar Republic. The war gave it a political cast and a strident tone . . . ; the revolution gave it unprecedented opportunities. But the Republic created little; it liberated what was already there." Liberated and helped to pay for it, as the National Academy of Music and the state-supported theaters confirm. Self-hating or not, composers wrote music that astonished, and playwrights dramas that execrated the bourgeoisie whose taxes paid the bills, while cabaret satirists such as the poet and songwriter Walter Mehring and cartoonists such as George Grosz enraged veterans and industrialists.²

It could not last, and it did not. The election of Field Marshal Paul von Hindenberg to the presidency in 1925 signified the public's impatience and its desire to return to traditional values and respect for authority. Meanwhile, Hitler was studying how to exploit that impatience, that desire. But all this was yet to come when Krenek arrived in Berlin in the fall of 1920. With its great orchestras and theaters, its many chamber music and choral groups, its cafés and gaudy nightlife, its dynamic press—all of which managed to keep going despite the accumulating disasters in the wake of the war—Berlin was the place to be if one were young, German-speaking, and looking to a career in music, drama, or literature. As things turned out, Krenek would try all three.

He came to the city at the end of September and immediately took a room in the

Charlottenburg district, on the fifth floor of a large house belonging to a retired soldier, his father's orderly during the recent war. He enrolled at once at the academy, which, he told his parents in an enthusiastic letter, was only minutes away by subway. Food, he added, was expensive, but concert tickets were cheap.

His father meticulously penciled in the margin of the letter the date on which it arrived and promptly responded. Thus began an extraordinary family correspondence that lasted until 1972, when Krenek's mother, who outlived her husband by twenty-seven years, died at the age of ninety-two. Extraordinary because of its duration—fifty-two years, covering most of Krenek's adult life and career—and the fact that all but a few letters from both ends have survived. The letters vary widely in their basic interest and noteworthiness, but the collection as a whole provides an incomparable log of day-to-day events in the life of one who would experience the triumphs and reversals, the acclaim and neglect, the prosperity and poverty, the confidence and despair that have been the lot of many a European composer in this century. The chronology is interrupted only by the intervals when Krenek was in Vienna and the period of the Second World War, when mail was suspended between Austria and the United States, to which Krenek had emigrated.

It was characteristic of Krenek's father to save his son's letters (though the practice was probably reinforced by the need of Viennese to save every scrap of paper in the days when the correspondence began). But not many twenty-year-olds would keep every letter from home, even if they were as lonely as Krenek was at first. He, however, reasoned that he might become a composer of sufficient importance to warrant interest in his papers—even though he had not yet received the least public recognition—and so he started putting aside every piece of paper that related to his career.³

One reason Krenek wrote was to reassure his parents, who were concerned about his welfare and particularly about how he was managing on his tiny allowance. They had no reason to fear that he would be a spendthrift, for he recorded every pfennig (dutifully reporting his expenditures in terms of Austrian schillings and groschen) and exercised much care. The extreme postwar inflation that would soon bring about the total collapse of German currency had not yet begun, but even so Krenek was shocked by the cost of the most ordinary things and tried to live as cheaply as possible. His one indulgence was theater and concert tickets, but this was no great expense, for he was often the guest of others.

Shortly before Christmas his sight-reading skills earned him a job playing the celesta in an opera orchestra that gave occasional concerts. At about the same time he was also appointed accompanist for the rehearsals of the academy's class in operatic choral music, and he sometimes coached the chorus himself. By January he even acquired two composition students of his own, and in a few months the number grew to eight. It is striking that in his first year of full commitment to music he was immersed in choral works, with which he was later to excel; in aspects of

opera, which was to bring him his greatest fame and fortune; and in teaching composition, by which he would survive during the harrowing years when his compositions brought him practically nothing.

Although he was lonely at first and grateful for the letters from his old friend Goering, who was also struggling to establish himself, Krenek, shy as he was, had soon made a surprising number of friends. In just a little over a month after his arrival he was telling his parents about going on country walks and attending Georg Kaiser's play *Europa* with a young physician named Barczynski, who, he assured them, was entirely respectable.⁴ Soon afterward, through the good offices of an administrator at the academy, he was introduced to music salons maintained by wealthy Jewish women in the great tradition of the nineteenth century. At musical evenings and private recitals on Sunday afternoons he met leading figures from conservative music circles at the home of Marie von Bülow, the widow of the pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow; and at the home of a Dr. Hartmann he met the modernists, among them the adventuresome young conductor Hermann Scherchen, who would soon have an important role in making Krenek's music known. The music patrons were so taken with him that before long Krenek was eating lunch every day in a different home, and at Christmas his new friends gave him expensive gifts that were chosen with real attention to his tastes. He had now clearly arrived socially—and not simply because people like the Hartmanns enjoyed encouraging young musicians from the academy, for although others received invitations too, Krenek was one of the few to be asked for repeated visits.

He met his best friends, the Demuths, during his second month in Berlin through Barczynski. Fritz Demuth was also a doctor who enjoyed the theater and rambles through the suburbs and nearby countryside. A few years older than Krenek, he lived in west Berlin with his mother and sister, who managed the family's elegant leather goods shop in the city center. The family was wealthy despite the depredations of the war, but still Demuth, a pediatrician, actively practiced medicine. (Barczynski did not.) Krenek would often meet him at the hospital where he was on night duty, and they would talk through the quiet hours until well past midnight. A man of culture and refined tastes, Demuth took pleasure in introducing Krenek to the museums, concert halls, and theaters of Berlin. Though not part of the music world, he was a violinist and played often in a string quartet at the family home. At times Krenek would accompany his friend on sonatas or take the piano part in trios.

While Krenek pretended to share Demuth's enjoyment of their rambles, he actually found the villages and countryside they visited rather dull, for he was accustomed to the mountain scenery around Innsbruck. He was therefore delighted when the Demuths invited him to visit those mountains with them in the summer of 1921, from there to travel to Vienna. Even so, in his letters home he wrote at length of landscapes and buildings seen around Berlin and showed an acuteness of observation that would later give vividness to the travel essays he authored. Interestingly,

though, he almost never mentioned the people he must have seen. It was scenery, not humanity, that held his attention.

Back in the restless days between his mustering out of the army and his departure for Berlin, Krenek had regarded himself as a fierce radical on social matters. He had welcomed the overthrow of the Habsburgs and had listened enthusiastically to reports from Russia, although he considered himself a Social Democrat, not a Communist. Demuth, too, had leftist sympathies and was imbued with the literary radicalism of Weimar intellectuals and Expressionist dramatists. Their conversations often dwelt on the supposed enslavement of the artist and the masses by militarists and businessmen, and in the spring of 1922 they planned a "scenic cantata" entitled *Zwingburg* (Tyrant's castle), for which Demuth provided the words. His libretto presented a day in the life of the masses during which they were given freedom by an invisible tyrant who lived in a darkly menacing pile that might have been a fortress or a great factory—or both. Only his terrible laugh was heard, jeering at the populace, who he knew could not cope with freedom and would, at the day's end, return to the safety of unthinking, unfeeling slavery.

But the radicalism of the two young men was all of ideals, of drama, of poetry. Neither took the least direct interest in any political group or movement active in Berlin at the time. Krenek knew from newspaper stories of the sporadic violence in the city, of the assassination of Matthias Erzberger by rightists who thought he had betrayed Germany when he urged the signing of the Versailles Treaty, of the state of emergency in effect throughout the autumn of 1921, of the increasing pinch of extreme inflation. Yet, as he took pains to inform his parents in one of his first letters home, he was wholly uninvolved, as were his companions at the academy. Indeed, during the Berlin general strike of February 1922, when all utilities were cut off and transportation came to a halt, he wrote about the difficulties he had in getting on with his composing without heat or light but said nothing about the condition of the Berliners or the issues being fought over. The fashionable despair of *Zwingburg* may have been Demuth's response as a sympathetic observer to the collapse of the strike. But one has only to compare the genteel melancholy there expressed with the rage and cynicism of Brecht to see how remote in feeling and understanding the two friends were from the actual social issues and conflict.⁵

Krenek was, in fact, a fastidious elitist by temperament, a deeply, though unconsciously, loyal son of the Viennese professional class, with a distaste for the general populace, its pastimes, culture, and society, particularly as these showed themselves in what seemed to him the ponderous gray ugliness of Berlin itself, a city he would never like. The image of the people as a brute easily manipulated by tyrants and charlatans and at odds with any person or idea of grace and distinction appears in virtually all the libretti he was to write himself, beginning with *Der Sprung über den Schatten* (The leap over the shadow, 1923) and continuing right down to *Sardakai* (1969). That image is latent, too, in many of his travel essays. Even in his affection-

ate tribute to his homeland of 1930, the song cycle *Reisebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen* (Travel book from the Austrian Alps), his countrymen are treated almost as features of the landscape, being viewed from the outside by a tourist and not from the position of one who “belongs.” When during the early thirties Krenek briefly entered into political activism in Vienna, his ties were all with intellectuals like himself and not with ordinary people. He was moved to become involved by a conservative love of ancient Austrian traditions and an elitist’s detestation of the barbarism of Nazi mobs far more than by indignation over social injustice or the plight of the working class or the then-proscribed Social Democratic party. The flavor, not the fact, of political revolution was what mattered to him.

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Once enrolled at the academy, Krenek caught the attention of a remarkable man, Dr. Georg Schünemann, the assistant director and real administrator of its day-to-day affairs. Thirty-six at the time of Krenek’s appearance, Schünemann was a somewhat pedantic musicologist who had made a name for himself with a history of conducting. But although his scholarship was focused on the past, he was interested in progressive music and alert to everything new going on in the city. Genial and gregarious, he served on the board of directors of the Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein (German Universal Music Society), an organization important for supporting new music, and he had a wide circle of friends among composers, conductors, performers, patrons, and critics, both in Berlin and elsewhere. A kind and hospitable man who liked to invite students to his home for an evening of music and coffee (a considerable treat in those hard times), he was in a position to do a great deal to advance them once he was persuaded of their promise. He would take them about in musical circles and introduce them to his influential friends. It was under his sponsorship that Krenek made his way among the salons of the wealthy.

Also affiliated with the academy was Gustav Havemann, a violinist and leader of a string quartet that performed throughout Germany and sometimes accepted student compositions. Another resource for students was Dr. Otto Schneider, a member of the editorial board of the important Viennese music journal *Anbruch* (Vanguard); loosely connected with the academy, he liked to organize “Anbruch concerts,” at which student works were sometimes performed. When they were, they might be printed in the magazine or even issued separately by Universal Edition, the powerful Viennese music publishing house that put out *Anbruch*.⁶ Schneider also managed and occasionally directed the orchestra in which Krenek played the celesta.

But before these men would support a young composer, he had to arouse their interest in his music. This was done by means of the many student performances that formed a regular part of the curriculum. Superior works were selected for the *Vortragsabende*, or evening recitals for the public, which were repeated at Sunday

matinees. Then, if all went well, Schünemann would arrange chamber concerts and recitals in the homes of wealthy patrons, which were attended by the leading critics. But of greatest importance were the music festivals held in Berlin, Weimar, Nürnberg, Wiesbaden, and other cities, which served as showcases for new works and with which Schünemann and to a lesser extent Schreker were well connected. If they chose to, they might manage to place among works by the leading European composers a composition of a student in whom they were interested.

Among those most likely to succeed were the young Viennese, who displayed great ability in Schreker's composition classes, in part because of the training he had given them before they all moved to Berlin. They were not a closely knit group but strong individualists with few ideas, musical or otherwise, in common. Like Krenek, the others took almost no interest in political or social issues; nevertheless, although they tended to be isolated from their surroundings, they were not interested in cutting figures as lonely geniuses in a world of Philistines indifferent to their talents. Their ambitions were simple: they wanted to be popular and to make a lot of money. On considering Richard Strauss, whose fame and fortune they envied, they concluded that the quickest way to the top was through operas.* They were also much aware of the rapid rise of the young violist and composer Paul Hindemith, who, just turned twenty-five, had been conducting the orchestra of the Frankfurt Opera since he was twenty, and whose first music drama, *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* (Murderer, the hope of women),† its text an Expressionist play by Oskar Kokoschka, was to be given its first performance in Stuttgart during June 1921.

Yet even as the students dreamed and talked, opportunities began to come their way. First, late in October 1920, a work by Rathaus was played at the academy, and the next month works by Rosenstock, Hába, and Wilhelm Grosz, who had studied with Schreker in Vienna but had not yet followed him to Berlin, were performed and well received. Krenek, however, had to wait for his debut until December, when his graceful and charming *Serenade*, op. 4, for violin, viola, cello, and clarinet, composed in 1919 before his move to Berlin, was played at a school concert. He was already assured of its merit, though, because even before his first month at the academy was out Dr. Schneider accepted it for *Anbruch*, where it appeared in December. The first public performance of the piece, which was also the first such for Krenek of any significance, took place in February 1921. Frau Hartmann brought a large group, and the critic of the *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag* attended and wrote a favorable account.

Krenek was pleased by the attention but downplayed it, for he had suddenly caught fire and was ablaze with creative energy. Great shifts were taking place in his

*Krenek, however, had momentarily taken the view that dramatic considerations should not be allowed to interfere with the autonomy of music and thus that he should not write operas. (He was to brood on the competing demands of drama and music, or simply words and music, throughout his life.) For this reason he organized the music for *Zwingburg* along the lines of an oratorio.

†This title is frequently given in English as *Murder, the Hope of Women*.

musical sensibility, and he would soon leave far behind the deft pleasantries of this modest work. He had been ignited not by the prosaic shoptalk of his classmates but by the innovative Expressionist plays he saw with Barczynski and Demuth, by the experiments in stagecraft of Leopold Jessner, which he liked, and most of all by scores that he had purchased and was now studying with the closest attention. In his letters home he told of acquiring the music of Max Reger; Bruckner's Fourth and Eighth symphonies; a quartet (almost certainly the Second) and a suite by Bartók, whom he would later acknowledge as an especially powerful influence at this time; and Schönberg's *Kammersymphonie* (Chamber symphony), *Drei Klavierstücke* (Three piano pieces, the first truly atonal composition), and *Pierrot lunaire*. In a matter almost of days he moved toward a new aggressively atonal style, deliberately violent, undisciplined, and "wild." This, as events would show, was a critical moment in his development as a composer and person.

Such inner stirrings made him impatient. Convinced that he was not progressing, he wrote to his parents as early as October 18, 1920, to say that perhaps he ought to study with Schönberg, now teaching in Mödling near Vienna. Schreker, whose career was approaching its apex, spent much time away from the academy conducting performances of his works. He no longer seemed much interested in his students, who were left on their own for days at a time. Krenek did not mind this much because he liked to work by himself, but he was disappointed when Schreker did not have time to review all that his students had written: he wanted to hear what Schreker had to say about his instrumentation, over which he had slaved, since this was one of his teacher's great strengths. Even more aggravating to him was Schreker's apparent feeling of possessiveness toward those students who had followed him from Vienna and resentment of much show of independence among them. Nevertheless, Schreker still tried on occasion to be helpful, promising, for example, to pay to have the parts of Krenek's Violin Sonata, op. 3, copied and to obtain a violinist so that the work could be performed at an academy recital—which it was, on May 6, 1921. He looked over an Adagio for Symphonic Orchestra by Krenek and liked it so much that he urged the student to put aside all other projects for more work in this style. Instead, Krenek dropped the Adagio. Plainly, Schreker's authority was rapidly diminishing, in part because Krenek was becoming contemptuous of his mentor's music, which seemed in the light of his studies of Bartók and Schönberg to be old-fashioned and flaccid.

Meanwhile, the role of good-natured Dr. Schünemann in Krenek's development was increasing. Just ten days after arriving in Berlin, Krenek wrote home describing Schünemann's many little kindnesses to him; and even before his first month was over Schünemann endeavored, without success, to have Krenek's Sonata for Violin and Piano performed at a composers' festival in Weimar. When Krenek spoke of his restlessness, Schünemann advised him to work independently as much as possible but to remain at the academy for the sake of the performance opportunities. Such

counsel, though perhaps inappropriate from one in Schünemann's position, shows how quickly he had grasped Krenek's potential and how well he understood the young man's new need to throw off constraints. Seeing that it would be expensive for Krenek to stay on, he tried to relieve Krenek's financial anxieties by getting him a job as pianist in a movie house and then by obtaining for him a commission to write between-the-acts music for a production of Schiller's *Fiesco* at the National Theater. The director wanted just ordinary effects, including a "Revolution March" with bells, and Krenek complied in five days. The play did well, he told his parents, but no one noticed the music, which Krenek thought was just as well, for it was, he said, "very shabby." (It has since vanished.) When income from such small jobs and his teaching, in addition to his allowance from home, proved too little to keep Krenek going, Schünemann persuaded a friend, Dr. Werner Wolffheim, to give him one thousand marks; as inflation was not yet extreme, this was enough to pay Krenek's fees for a second year at the academy and leave him five hundred to live on.

But Schünemann's most significant act, even more helpful than his efforts to have Krenek's music played, was introducing his protégé to the composer and concert pianist Eduard Erdmann at the end of November 1920. Erdmann was Krenek's elder by four years and was just beginning to earn recognition for his recitals and his compositions. His First Symphony was premiered at the Weimar festival where Schünemann had hoped to place Krenek's sonata. Born in Latvia of German parentage, Erdmann was an articulate and scholarly champion of modernism who believed resolutely in the autonomy of a musical work as an entity in its own right without reference to anything outside itself. The two young men became close friends almost at once and remained so until Erdmann's death in 1958.

Krenek was soon calling at the Erdmann home at least once a week, partly because he was so taken with Erdmann's pretty, vivacious, and warmhearted wife, Irene, but even more because of the conversation that went on around a samovar until late in the night. Erdmann's attention helped to compensate for Schreker's neglect and to rein in Krenek's wilder impulses: though a modernist, he was also a strict constructionist, and he insisted that every note be defensible on grounds of formal necessity. It took some time, given Krenek's rebellious mood of the moment, but gradually he brought his young friend around to this view, thereby starting Krenek on a path that in time would bring him to twelve-tone music and thence to integral serialism. In the meantime he became a devoted advocate of Krenek's music—even when it appeared to him to be undisciplined—and by his patience, sympathy, and powers of analysis and explication he quickened Krenek's development as no one at the academy, not even Schünemann for all his kindness, could have done.⁷

Through Erdmann, Krenek met another man who contributed to his growth, the Austrian pianist and composer Artur Schnabel, now nearing forty and famous worldwide for his interpretation of Beethoven's piano music. They had in fact met before, for Krenek had gone to Schnabel's home in the spring of 1921 to show the pianist his First Piano Sonata, hoping that Schnabel would accept it for perfor-

mance; although he received Krenek courteously, Schnabel was busy with a lesson and quickly dismissed him with scarcely a glance at the music. Now, however, under Erdmann's benign sponsorship, they became warm friends, and Schnabel, who for all his devotion to Beethoven was as fiercely modernist as Erdmann, joined the others around the samovar. He liked to keep up with everything new, and by way of records he brought back from concert tours in the United States he introduced Krenek to the music of Gershwin, Irving Berlin, and Vincent Youmans, which passed for jazz among Europeans unacquainted with the real thing. Schnabel himself had recently composed a fox-trot for his *Dance Suite* (which was performed in Berlin by Erdmann during the spring of 1922), thereby providing a model that was soon to be important for Krenek. Curiously, however, Krenek did not hear Schnabel play until many years later, for Schnabel had forsworn all public performances in Germany following a quarrel with a concert manager.

In the meantime, fortune continued to supply Krenek with new leads. Early in 1921, Alois Hába introduced him to Emile Hertzka, the powerful head of Universal Edition who had recently begun a reorganization that would make that firm the preeminent publisher of contemporary music. Indefatigable in attending performances of new works, especially those by "his" composers, Hertzka knew everyone of importance in European music. He had already heard of Krenek through Schneider and *Anbruch* and wanted to meet him; so the aggressive Hába, who had made a point of getting to know Hertzka, kindly introduced his colleague, whom he had already generously praised in letters to the publisher. As a result, Krenek pressed his piano sonata on Hertzka, who published it a few months later; thus was established a relationship whereby Universal Edition brought out virtually all of Krenek's music until 1938, when the Nazis took over the firm. Although the connection was not always easy, as from time to time Krenek was convinced that Hertzka was either neglecting or exploiting him, it ensured, together with Schünemann's assiduous sponsorship, exposure for his music in the days before he became known.

Schünemann, meanwhile, kept up his campaign of support. As a director of the Musikverein he placed Krenek's String Quartet no. 1, op. 6, composed during January and February of 1921, on the program of the society's composers' festival scheduled for Nürnberg in mid-June. For one so young and unknown to have a work chosen for the program, which was in fact a kind of competition, was an extraordinary bit of luck, and it astonished Schreker, who knew nothing about the quartet, since it had been brought into being entirely apart from him. It was Krenek's first atonal composition.⁸

Anyone coming to the quartet from his *Tanzstudie* [for piano], op. 1b, the Piano Sonata no. 1, op. 2, and *Serenade*, op. 4, Krenek's only prior published works, must have been startled by the abrupt changes of style and mastery. They and the many unpublished songs that Krenek wrote between 1917 and 1920 are well-crafted, agreeable student works. The quartet, however, is a work of genius—youthful, to be sure, but genius nonetheless. Its resemblances to the Second Quartet of Bartók

show how closely Krenek had been studying the music he had bought a few weeks before composing his own quartet. Yet as obvious as Bartók's example and influence are in Krenek's aggressive, syncopated rhythms, the percussive attacks, the zitherlike strumming effects, the many ostinato passages for cello, and the teasing hints of familiar triads offset by flintily dissonant suspensions, the quartet is a markedly original work and plainly Krenek's own. Especially notable is a masterful double fugue—how well Schreker had taught counterpoint!—wherein the dissonances are most abrasive and exciting. It is scarcely credible that in the space of a few months the teenager who had composed the bland *Serenade* had become a twenty-year-old capable of producing such an intense, complex, and mature work.

Played without pause, the eight parts of the quartet circle around the intervallic sequence known in German nomenclature as the B-A-C-H motif (in English usage, B-flat-A-C-B-natural),⁹ presenting it in a variety of rhythmic patterns, transpositions, and registers and as the second subject of the double fugue. Interspersed among the discords are fragments of melody and ethereal concords and some gravely meditative moments. But Krenek did not pause to explore his plenitude of ideas; the work shows a youthful exuberance as it rushes forward to the next exciting possibility. When, near the end, the music gradually subsides, it is somberly moving, almost tragic. The ending, however, is ambiguous, consisting as it does of an eight-part chord (all instruments given double stops) constructed from open fifths. It hints of a C-major triad, but there is no E. The listener is left in a state of awe and disquietude.

The quartet was the sensation of the festival when it was performed on June 16, 1921, by the Lambinon Quartet of Berlin, to whom it is dedicated. Their execution, Krenek reported to his parents, was fabulous ("ganz fabelhaft"), but the audience was greatly upset ("heftig beunruhigt"), and many walked out during the performance; those who remained, Krenek thought, might have had their appetite for luncheon spoiled (the performance took place at 11:00 A.M.). In any event, the music caused an uproar that continued through an afternoon of agitated debate. Schünemann was delighted by the attention the work brought to his protégé and particularly by the fact that it won the approval of the influential pianist and musicologist Leo Kestenberg, musical advisor to the Prussian Ministry of Science, Culture, and Education, who urged Krenek to return to Berlin for the next academic year and offered to help him, saying that it was important that he become known apart from his association with Schreker—as if Krenek needed to be told.

The quartet was widely commented on: within a few days Krenek reported that he had seen twenty-six reviews. Soon the number stood at nearly fifty. Whether they were for or against the work (and most were decidedly against), these accounts were bound to make his name known. One critic, whose words Krenek quoted for his parents with evident glee, called the performance a "bodily injury" and thought that Krenek should leave town immediately. He comforted his readers with the news that as Krenek's *Serenade* would soon be played at Donaueschingen, the mischief-

maker would soon be on his way. But Paul Bekker, the scholarly critic of the powerful *Frankfurter Zeitung*, thought well of the work. Most glorious of all, Krenek had been approached with great respect in the local library by a stranger who had recognized him from his publisher's picture. Ecstasy!

With other ensembles beginning to inquire about the quartet, Universal Edition quickly accepted it for publication, but many performance opportunities were missed because of a seven-month delay before it appeared. In the interval *Serenade* was performed late in July at the opening concert of the first festival put on by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde zu Donaueschingen (Society of Friends of Music at Donaueschingen) under the sponsorship of Prince von Fürstenberg, a wealthy and devoted patron whose support helped to make this annual event one of the most important for contemporary European music. A quartet by Hába was played on the same program, and later in the day Hindemith's String Quartet no. 3, op. 16 (1922), was presented. Also included in the festival were songs by Erdmann, Berg's Piano Sonata, op. 1, and a new string quartet by Philipp Jarnach, a young disciple of Busoni. Unlike his First String Quartet, Krenek's *Serenade* pleased both audience and critics. Well satisfied with the results of his first academic year away from home, Krenek then set off on his ramble through the Tirol with the Demuths.

. . .

What a year it had been! He had left Vienna as, essentially, a boy who had simply made up his mind to become a composer. He returned after his vacation with the Demuths as a man already being cited in the press as a controversial new figure. He had met many of the leading musical personalities of Berlin, he had been welcomed in distinguished salons, his work had been performed at two important festivals, and he had been taken up by the leading publisher of modern music. He had tried teaching and composing for the theater. And he had drafted his first real symphony, although he would not complete the instrumentation until the following December.

Most important, he had parted from his parents and made his way among strangers, and he had outgrown his student status, even though he had not yet left the academy and could still learn from Schreker, who excelled in orchestration and would oversee the scoring of his symphony. It was no small matter for him to cease to be a student, for it was a role that accorded with his upbringing as an only child in a somewhat solemn household and with his performance under Mras. One might have expected that the adolescent who had imitated Sallust would by degrees become a musical archeologist, devoting a lifetime to writing tracts about the quarrels of Wilhelm von Hirsau (d. 1091) with the musical theories of Boethius (d. 524?). Indeed, were it not for the lavish creative energy that was just beginning to appear, along with a rebelliousness and mischievousness epitomized (as will be seen) in the character of Jonny, Krenek might have ended just so. But now his foot was on the path and there was no turning back.

Just how far he had come in a few months can be measured by the fact that when

he showed the unfinished score of his symphony to Hermann Scherchen, the latter thought at once of conducting it in Leipzig and Berlin during the coming season. Thirty at the time, Scherchen lectured at the academy, edited *Melos*, a musical journal rivaling *Anbruch* which he founded in 1919, and contended with Schreker for leadership of the progressive wing in Berlin. He was a tireless advocate of new music, but he had no fixed post as a conductor, and the orchestras he led often had too little time to cope with the scores he chose; his advocacy was therefore a mixed blessing. Hearing that a performance for Krenek might be in the offing, Schünemann promised to help, and he was as good as his word, for when Krenek finished the orchestration, Schünemann persuaded Dr. Wolffheim to pay for copying the parts. Schreker did not want the academy orchestra to play the symphony—even though Krenek, now a second-year student, had worked on the orchestration with him in what was probably their closest and most amicable relationship since they had left Vienna—for he did not want to use up rehearsal time on a work that he thought was beyond the orchestra's powers. Still, both he and Schünemann worried lest a first performance under Scherchen be poorly done, and late in February 1922 he changed his mind and decided that the academy orchestra should have it. By this time, however, Krenek was committed to Scherchen, who by prodigious efforts in the midst of the Berlin General Strike raised the six thousand marks, most of it from Dr. Wolffheim, that he needed to pay the players. The premiere took place in Berlin on March 17 and was an immense success (despite moments of uncertainty during the rehearsals when Krenek thought the playing very ragged). The audience, which included Walter Gropius and Wassily Kandinsky, was enthusiastic. Thus encouraged, Krenek immediately started working on an immense second symphony, which he finished, all except the instrumentation, in just eight weeks.

A splendid ("ganz hervorragend") performance of Krenek's String Quartet no. 2, op. 8, by Dr. Havemann's group late in April helped to sustain Krenek's creative excitement. Although it caused a commotion and provoked harsh reviews, the new quartet did not arouse so great a scandal as the First, perhaps because the Berlin audience was more blasé than the Nürnberg one. Yet it was much more dissonant than the First and was characterized by a pulsing energy that endangered but did not quite rupture its coherence. Krenek had written it late in the summer of 1921 while visiting his parents after his vacation with the Demuths. Even after the First, one would not expect to see a work with the scope and force of the Second coming from one so young and comparatively inexperienced, or a work so assertive from one as shy and diffident as Krenek still was. The influence of Bartók is all over it—almost, at moments, to the point of parody. Yet except as it helps the listener better to understand the work, this influence has no bearing on the work's intrinsic merit. All beginners in the arts learn by imitating and even pillaging the works of their forerunners. The better the beginners, the better the things they steal. One measure of Krenek's musical intelligence is the fact that he looked to Bartók rather than, say, Reger or Ravel, as an exemplar.

The performance of the Second String Quartet, which came toward the close of his second year, made Krenek all the more certain that he should quit the academy, in spite of Schünemann's counsel and Wolffheim's support. When he had returned to Berlin in the autumn of 1921, Felix Petyrek, a fellow student under Schreker in Vienna, briefly moved in with him. An ebullient bohemian who had taught piano in Salzburg but longed for the bright lights of Berlin, Petyrek introduced his younger friend to the cafés. This life-style quickly palled, though. Unlike those who were in no hurry to give up the relatively carefree life of a student, Krenek was impatient to get started on a career; he even thought of applying for the post of music director at the Jessner Theater, but he did not follow through. Leo Kesten-berg, who had been so taken with the First String Quartet, obtained for him a grant of three thousand marks, twenty-five hundred of which came from a fund established by Fritz Kreisler for the support of talented students. But now Germany's appalling inflation had begun, and Krenek was in difficult straits. Despite his growing reputation, he was no longer invited to lunch at the homes of the wealthy. He ate at canteens near the school, and, by once more assisting with the chorus and taking private students, he got by. Such little spare time as he had was spent with Demuth, sometimes, when he had the money, at the theater.

Even though they had worked well together on Krenek's First Symphony and Schreker had eventually allowed that the academy orchestra should perform it, he now agreed that Krenek should leave. Krenek wrote to his parents to say that he would depart at the end of the term, with or without a certificate, which he decided he would not need for a career in composing. His determination to break the last few ties with Schreker was reinforced when he attended a dress rehearsal of Schreker's celebrated opera *Der Schatzgräber* (The treasure hunter, 1918) and found it, as he put it, "miserable." Thinking that this was the final break, he left Berlin in June to spend the first part of the summer working on the instrumentation of his Second Symphony and beginning to compose music for Demuth's libretto of *Zwingburg* at the Erdmann's rented villa at Lippe-Neuerstorf near the town of Lütjenburg, on the Baltic Sea not far from Kiel. This interval was followed by a period at a summer home near Semmering in the Austrian Voralpenland, where he finished *Zwingburg* after the poet and novelist Franz Werfel, whom he met there, had polished Demuth's text. Then, despite his insistence that he had finished with the academy, he returned once more in October, enrolling in courses in music history, recent piano music, and modern orchestration under, of course, Schreker. For the moment their relations were once again so cordial that Schreker even spoke of eventually giving him an appointment at the academy.

It could not last. Early in November Krenek wrote to his parents that Schreker had seen the score of *Zwingburg* in Vienna, where Krenek had sent it for consideration by Universal Edition, and had been greatly offended—presumably because this was the first inkling he had of its existence. A few days later Krenek reported a rumor that Schreker was intriguing against the opera, claiming that the publishers—

who were also his own—should not accept anything from his students Hába, Petyrek, and Krenek without his approval. “I have never heard of such a swine,” Krenek wrote in a rage. “He is actually my worst enemy.” Fortunately, he claimed, Hertzka was too businesslike to accept such a constraint.

In the meantime, Ernst Sert, the managing director of the Frankfurt Opera, had become interested in *Zwingsburg* and had invited Krenek to visit him and discuss a production. Uncertain as to how he should respond, Krenek sought the advice of Paul Bekker, the Frankfurt musicologist and writer who had written so favorably about his First String Quartet. Bekker responded at once, inviting Krenek to stay with him when his First Symphony was performed there early in December. This would give them a chance to talk, and Krenek could consult with Sert at the time. All went well, and when Krenek played a piano reduction of *Zwingsburg*, Sert accepted it on the spot. Soon after, however, Sert lost his position, and *Zwingsburg* was not performed until October 1924, when Erich Kleiber conducted its premiere at the Berlin State Opera. Meanwhile, Schreker’s anger with those he called the “rebels” at the academy came to a head. Not without reason, he accused Schünemann of encouraging their disloyalty, but he withdrew his charges when Schünemann threatened to resign.

Not that it mattered any longer to Krenek. His talks with Bekker, the performance of the First Symphony in a straightforward professional arrangement that did not include any behind-the-scenes fundraising or other unusual circumstances, and Sert’s enthusiasm over *Zwingsburg* finally tipped the balance, and he did not return to the academy to complete the academic year (though at its end he was given a certificate signifying his completion of a course of studies in composition). Erdmann and Bekker, both of whom treated him as an established figure, had entirely replaced Schreker and Schünemann as his mentors, to the degree that he needed any. He did not see Schreker again except briefly in November 1923, by which time the tension between them had subsided and they were reconciled.*

. . .

Late in the spring of 1923, Krenek journeyed to Kassel for the annual festival put on by the society that had presented his First String Quartet at Nürnberg two years earlier. Schünemann had urged him to submit his Second Symphony for possible performance, even though the society ordinarily was conservative in its program-

*In 1932 Schreker was forced by Chancellor von Papen to resign his post at the academy. He was allowed to teach briefly at the less distinguished Prussian Academy of Arts, but when Hitler came to power he was pensioned off. He died following a stroke on March 21, 1934, two days before he would have turned fifty-six, “shunned and forgotten by those who only a few years earlier had hailed him as a music leader” (H. F. Redlich, “Franz Schreker,” in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th ed. [New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1954], 7:530). Schünemann, in contrast, prospered by events, for it was he who took Schreker’s place at the academy. Several years afterward he was made head of the music department of the Prussian State Library, where he continued his musicological writing. He died in Berlin at the age of sixty shortly before the fall of the city in 1945. He and Krenek never met again.

ming: its officers regarded Wagner and Richard Strauss as pretty advanced. Schünemann and a few others on the board of directors had been trying to liven things up—and they had certainly succeeded with Krenek's quartet. Now Schünemann was using his influence again, and on March 27 Krenek got word that the symphony had been accepted and would be performed on June 11. He at once began a complicated correspondence with his parents to arrange for them to attend. Although his father now managed a shoe store belonging to the Humanic chain, his parents were still impoverished, and much thought was devoted to choosing a route between Vienna and Kassel that would keep costs at a minimum but still enable them to do some sightseeing. In mid-May Krenek proposed an itinerary taking them from Vienna to Passau, Regensburg, Nürnberg, Würzburg, Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Giesen, Kassel (for the festival), Bebra, Eisensach, Erfurt, Naumburg, Jena, Probstzella, Bamberg, Nürnberg again, Augsburg, Munich, Rosenheim, Kufstein, Innsbruck, Salzburg, and finally Vienna. Given the temperaments of the parties involved, so elaborate a plan could not possibly be accepted without many anxious revisions, but in the end his parents did manage to attend.

What they heard was a clumsy performance of an awesome work. Composed in eight weeks ending on May 23, 1922, and orchestrated in just another month, the Second Symphony was the foremost work of Krenek's early years and remains the longest, most ambitious orchestral piece he has ever undertaken. It was conceived during an extraordinary two-year interval that began with the composing of the First String Quartet and included *Zwingburg*, a dozen songs, several works for piano, a sonnet, the Second String Quartet, and two other symphonies! (He finished his Third Symphony shortly before Christmas in 1922.) Reflecting on this convulsion of creativity, Krenek later confessed: "I am unable to figure out how it was possible even mechanically to write down so many notes in so short a time, not to mention the creative effort that had to go with it or before it." What made the effort all the more remarkable was his practice at the time of developing virtually the entirety of his longer works in his head and then, having, as it were, memorized them, writing them down.¹⁰

Although they were composed within a short time of one another, the three symphonies are unlike. The first is jagged and discrete: it is contentiously and insistently atonal, and the particularity of the details is so emphasized that in many places the work seems almost a jumble of now this, now that; for the factors, especially the counterpoint, which in the absence of tonality and harmonic progressions must provide coherence and unity are often overwhelmed by the clamor of the individual elements. On first hearing one gets an impression of overwriting, of Krenek's having striven too hard for singular effects. It is as if he had determined that every portion, even every measure, must have its surprise, its special jolt. The effect is percussive; even though Krenek exploited the timbres and sonorities of the orchestra, the work often seems as if it were a transcription of something originally

intended for the piano or a quartet playing parts filled with sforzandi and pizzicati and requiring innumerable decisive, even rasping, down-bowings.

The Second Symphony, which followed soon after, shows great advances in Krenek's understanding of the orchestral medium. Its details, taken alone, seem less radical; but in terms of the overall impression that it makes the work as a whole is far more daring than the First Symphony. Although it has many startling explosions of musical energy and its dissonances are more acrid than those of the First, its impact is achieved not by a succession of blows raining, as it were, on the listener from every quarter but by the accumulation of an awesome and finally overpowering mass. The total effect is much more powerful than is the case with the First—and more “revolutionary,” because the particulars, instead of seeming to stand alone and deliver in turn their separate shocks, join in creating a colossus against which the listener has insufficient prior experience to make a defense.

Rather than trying to match or even, if it were possible, to exceed the might of the Second Symphony, Krenek in his Third wrote for a smaller orchestra deployed more conventionally. The Third Symphony teases the listener with long lines suggesting both melody and tonality, and while it has its confrontational moments, its overall effect is more ingratiating than challenging. Sprightly, witty, and at times almost mischievously parodistic, its spirit is Gallic (even though Krenek was not yet acquainted with the music of Les Six or Stravinsky's Neoclassicism). The difference between this work and the Second is so great that one wonders how they could have come in the space of less than a year from the same imagination. It is as if Dostoyevsky, having struggled with *The Brothers Karamazov*, were to toss off some bit of *joie d'esprit* in the manner of Cocteau.

For all the trifling air of the Third, Krenek in his symphonies was deliberately seeking to establish himself as Mahler's successor. With the confidence of youth he wanted, as he put it in later years, to write “bigger and better” symphonies. He knew Mahler's music well, having heard much of it at concerts in Vienna. He was impressed by the folkish elements, the adaptations of popular songs and dance rhythms, which signified to him that Mahler was down-to-earth, one of the people, and somehow “more realistic” than other symphonists. The elements that appealed to him shocked his father, who observed, on hearing the bugle calls in Mahler's Fourth, that he heard enough of that sort of thing around the barracks and did not attend concerts in order to hear it again. He thought Mahler's music was unseemly. But that was all to the good as far as the younger Krenek was concerned, for although he had not been affected by the social upheavals in Berlin and was at heart an elitist, he liked to regard himself as an Enemy of the Establishment, and Mahler for him symbolized defiance of its conservatism, of its concern with respectability. He admired Mahler for rejecting the voluptuous tumescence of late Romantic and post-Romantic orchestral music in favor of hitherto unheard and astringent combinations of timbres that made the musical elements distinct and set them off from, or

even against, one another, and he determined to do the same in his own orchestral works.¹¹

In fact, he hoped to do even more.

I was convinced that the young composer had to serve the cause of progress. But, now to be more progressive meant to break away from the conventional concepts with much more daring and conviction. . . . [I was] attracted by the elemental features of Béla Bartók and began to write music that dispensed rather cavalierly with the respectability of tonal relationships and was rich in dissonant polyphony and rhythmic insistence on protracted ostinatos.¹²

Schreker had taught that music did not merely change but actually progressed through the invention of new instruments and the evolution of such chords as the dominant seventh through dominant ninths, elevenths, thirteenth, and their variant versions toward more expressive and profound musical dimensions, and he urged his students to make discoveries, to be original. Krenek agreed but thought Schreker did not take things far enough—particularly after he had purchased and studied works by Bartók and Schönberg. At first he knew little about Schönberg's music, which, as he later said, "still remained rather obscure."¹³ But the influence of Bartók was immediate, even though, as Claudia Maurer Zenck has noted, Krenek at once pushed beyond Bartók into what she calls "intuitive" atonality that still contained what Krenek himself later termed "isolated remnants of traditional tonality like debris left over from a bygone age."¹⁴ What matters, of course, is not how much influence Bartók had but the measure of Krenek's daring and originality in the use he made of what he learned from Bartók's example. As for Schreker's notion of progress, which seemed to justify the neglect at the Vienna and Berlin academies of all music earlier than Bach's, Krenek later vehemently repudiated it once he had had the opportunity to study the music of composers such as Palestrina, Ockeghem, and di Lasso. "While railroads nowadays are obviously better than they were a hundred years ago . . .," he wrote, "no one in his right senses would claim that the symphony has made similar progress from Mozart to Mahler. The perfect work of art can never be superseded by a later creation, because its perfection is measurable only within its own frame of reference."¹⁵ That, however, is not what he thought in 1922, and perhaps for his composing it is just as well.

Much of his atonality was not intuitive at all. Paradoxically, he had been drawn further and further from tonality by a book about Bach's polyphony by Ernst Kurth, a singularly conservative Swiss musicologist. Schreker did not make much use of counterpoint himself, but he believed that it served as a necessary restraint on reckless young minds and insisted that his pupils master it. Among the unnumbered student works of Krenek that survive are many canons, fugues, and double fugues written in 1917. Schreker drove the students hard, and Krenek, who had a mind that took naturally to counterpoint, remembers him as teaching it very well. One

day in class, Krenek saw Kurth's *Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkts* (Fundamentals of linear counterpoint), which had been published the previous year, in a bookcase and asked if he might borrow it. As it turned out, this was to be for Krenek's composing the single most important book he ever read, although its effect was not to be felt for two or three years.

To make his readers appreciate Bach's polyphony, Kurth emphasized the coherence and forward-moving energy of the melodic lines and the simultaneous tension and integration among them which Bach had achieved in accordance with traditional principles of counterpoint. Kurth insisted that *each note* must have a meaningful function in a composition's total configuration. He gave to contrapuntal necessity preeminence over euphony or strict conformity with the "laws" of diatonic harmony. The result could be that notes thus justified would collide in harsh dissonances.

For all his espousal of radicalism, Krenek's imagination was attuned to order, logic, and the rigorous adherence to systems possessing these qualities. (This contradiction was an exact analogue of the antinomy in his social and political sympathies.) From this was derived his aptitude for counterpoint and an immediate sympathy with Kurth's thesis, which he took to heart. Later, in the aftermath of analyzing Bartók, he realized that he could have things both ways: Kurth's linearity could produce dissonances as wild as the boldest young outlaw pursuing originality could desire, but at the same time his satisfaction with order was assured. He did not go looking for new sound resources such as the microtonality with which his colleague Hába was beginning to experiment; rather, he pushed to their limits familiar materials and principles, achieving thereby an unprecedented intensity. His music was reckless in some respects, severely structured in others—or, as he himself once said, "juvenile, undisciplined, but *well organized*."¹⁶ Encouraged by Scherchen, Schnabel, and Erdmann, he surpassed what Schreker could tolerate. Yet Erdmann, too, insisted that every note be justified, and more than simply in terms of linearity. Gradually he would draw Krenek away from the strident atonality of this first period. No doubt Kurth, had he been present, would have done the same, for when Krenek met him in Zürich early in 1924 and tried to explain how important his book had been for him, Kurth was dismayed to hear that his speculations could be cited in support of contemporary music of a kind that he thoroughly disapproved.

Kurth certainly would have disapproved of the Second String Quartet, on which the influence of his thought is strong. The influence of Bartók, while still present, is less apparent than it was in the First. The dancelike rhythms and pizzicati of the second movement of the Second Quartet remind one of Bartók's music, but not as much as do aspects of the First Quartet, because the music in the Second is at the same time much more discordant and more conspicuously structured. Congruity with Kurth's principles, rather than preoccupation with curious chords, is suggested, yet the Second String Quartet is more radical and atonal, more tense and

flinty, more inimical to the audiences of its time than the First, even though it caused less commotion than the First at its premiere. Little two-note, three-note, and four-note cells are developed in tight patterns that anticipate stylistic features of Krenek's twelve-tone music (still a dozen years in the future). Instead of hurrying on to the next idea, as in the First, Krenek lingered and looked deeply. But not so as to touch the feelings of the hearer, for this is very "dry" music; where it pauses in meditation, the attitude seems to be speculative, detached, and analytical, and melodic passages affect one as sardonic rather than ingratiating. This brilliantly ordered, rigorously controlled music is Krenek's first truly "intellectual" work, a forerunner of *Sestina* and other serial works of the late fifties and early sixties. It must have made hard listening for those who first heard it at the Berlin Singakademie in the spring of 1922, not because it is difficult to follow, for the coherence is manifest and the form explicit, but because it never lets up, even in the slow ruminative portions. Andrew Porter, a particularly perceptive admirer of Krenek's music, wrote after hearing the Second String Quartet in 1979 that "the passages seem very long"—a significant observation in view of Porter's well-known patience with demanding scores. Yet, in keeping with Erdmann's and Kurth's dicta, every note has its musical reason for being.

Music such as a Berlin audience could endure in 1922 proved too much for Minnesota listeners twenty years later when, at no small risk to his position as conductor, Dimitri Mitropoulos in 1943 led the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in a performance of the Second Symphony.¹⁷ This was but the second time Krenek had heard this stupendous work, and he found that even after two decades it could move him deeply. Although he had long before repudiated the idea that music could represent anything or "tell a story," he was compelled to use imagery to suggest the measure of his response. "I feel," he said in memoirs he was writing at the time,

that the first two movements evoke very much the picture of a giant moving about in a cage, or cave. The first movement is full of terrific efforts to break the walls of the cave, or the bars of the cage; defiant stomping and pounding seem to be the dominant expressive qualities of the music, sorrowful resignation being the only lyrical detail coming to the fore. At one place the narrow intervals that open the movement in the pianissimo of celesta and violins, indicating a sort of hazy, misty atmosphere, are repeated in fortissimo by strings and brasses; it sounded to me like the cries of the poor souls in purgatory.

The second movement sounds like the result of such a resignation: indulgence in the narrowness to which the giant is confined, a sort of desperate dance, making a virtue out of the deficiency, madly hopping around in the cage, or cave.

The third, slow movement, is quite different, based as it is on strongly expressive patterns of great expansiveness. It . . . sounds like the passionate prayer for freedom uttered by someone who has finally broken down the inhibitions that prevented him thus far even to burst out in such a prayer. . . . The climax at the end . . . has, as I feel it now, more uplifting than crushing quality, but does not act as solution of the conflict;

it rather sounds like a delirious attempt to accept the contradictions as ordained by a supreme power and to integrate the conflicting elements into a sort of cosmic pandemonium.¹⁸

He insisted that this was not offered as a definitive interpretation of the meaning of the symphony, and in a later comment on the *Adagio*, after remarking that "there are passages expressing pain with an intensity that I wish I could produce again," he added: "I am quite sure that I felt none of all this when I wrote the piece. I was completely absorbed by the technical aspects of the project I had undertaken . . . [which was] contriving a very long piece on a monumental scale." Thus engrossed, he behaved "like a sleepwalker." If he had realized what he was doing, he thought, he might have developed the tendencies in the music much more than he did.¹⁹ Yet these tendencies, in keeping as they were with conditions in Germany (Walter Rathenau, the German foreign minister, was assassinated by anti-Semitic militarists as Krenek was completing the orchestration), were not at all indicative of his mood, for he was involved in his first serious love affair, and the lady was enchanting.

Listening to the work one is struck first by its turbulence: by the vehemence and clangor, the jarring collisions, the immense energy and sheer bulk. Bewildered and even a bit alarmed, one tries to make connections, taking as cues the extended *ostinati* or the touches of Mahler such as the march elements, fanfares, suggestions of bird calls, and choric passages. But, as Zenck has noted, the marchlike touches do not organize the work so much as simply drive it forward, while the fanfares "announce nothing but remain as signals without reference function."²⁰ T. W. Adorno, then an unknown twenty-year-old but in time one of the foremost musicologists and theorists of this century, attended the premiere and was so impressed by the seeming anarchy of the work that he formed the view (which he held for many years) that every work by Krenek had in it elements that obeyed no law, that were inexplicable and disruptive.²¹ As Zenck says, there is no theme in the first movement, as that term is ordinarily understood. In the absence of any stable tonal reference point, anything suggesting a cadence seems out of place. But Wilbur Ogdon has pointed out that all three of its movements open with the counterpointing of two thematic lines, and "a chromatic, slowly evolving melody is established before a more diatonic and rhythmically direct idea is added." Five such quasi-thematic ideas emerge in the first movement and are developed in strict accordance with Krenek's atonal conception of Kurth's linear counterpoint, whereby they provide conventional foreshadowing, repetition, and other means of integration. Timbres are used in the manner of Mahler to etch these ideas on the hearer's memory; gradually one becomes aware of motivic connections that bind the movement together, giving it not simply bulk but an epic sweep and grandeur. If one is not stupefied by the impact of the details or distracted by one's own attempts to follow hints of cadences that have no harmonic significance, the hearer can begin to perceive the unity of the

movement. In the second and third movements, clearly recognizable themes are present from the start, and, as Krenek's little narrative of the "action" suggests, the coherence and eloquence of the work are readily felt. It usually takes several hearings, however, to get beyond the impact of the details and comprehend the majesty of the whole. Then one sees that the work is an indubitable masterpiece and that Krenek's youthful aspirations were not vainglorious.

Few of those at the premiere would have agreed. Kassel, a moderate-sized industrial city and rail center northeast of Frankfurt, took itself seriously as a place of refinement and culture. It had a handsome museum and a palace with a picture gallery. Mahler had served there as *Kapellmeister* from 1883 to 1885. In 1913, however, its orchestra was less than the finest, and the local conductor was a man of limited ability with little understanding of contemporary music. As Krenek recalls, when the parts had been distributed, he told the players: "Now we are going to play a piece which you will not understand one bit. Whoever thinks he has the theme please play very loud."²² The players dutifully did so, and the ragged performance had a colossal effect that produced an immediate uproar in the audience. Programs and fists were waved above a tumult of shouting and shoving, and some people even came to blows. Scherchen, who was there, was greatly impressed, and young Adorno was simply overwhelmed by what he took to be a vision of terror and catastrophe. Hearing this symphony was to remain one of the most profound experiences of his life, and although he did not meet Krenek at this time, he formed an admiration for his music that he later expressed many times in lectures and essays, even if with time it became impossible for him to account for the features he admired by his own theories of music.* Schreker was not present, and he never heard the work, which was composed without his knowledge.

As for Schünemann, he was free, since no one was injured or arrested, to enjoy the fuss he had helped to stir up on behalf of modernism. His pleasure was the greater because all the important German critics were there, and it was immediately apparent from their accounts that his protégé had had an impact far exceeding the one he had made two years earlier with the First String Quartet. Reports were mixed, with unfavorable ones predominating, but still, Krenek was being discussed on every side. Paul Bekker praised the symphony in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He and Krenek had discussed its organization the previous December, and in the January *Anbruch* he published an account describing how Krenek used instrumental contrasts to focus attention on the motives and their polyphonic interaction. It is unlikely that many in the audience were much aware of these elements. But for good or ill, Krenek was now ticketed as an ultraprogressive, and his name was made.

Other modernists had already recognized him in the fall of 1922, when he had been invited to join the board of directors of the newly formed International Society

*The complicated relations between Krenek and Adorno and the latter's attempts to account for features of Krenek's music are discussed at length in Chapter 5.

for Contemporary Music (ISCM). The previous August some young composers from Vienna had presented a festival of new music at Salzburg. (Curiously, no works by Krenek or the other Viennese who had followed Schreker to Berlin or by students and associates of Schönberg were included.) The festival was successful enough to inspire its organizers and Paul Stefan, editor of *Anbruch*, to found ISCM. Its first president was Edward J. Dent, a genial musicologist and minor composer on the faculty of Cambridge University who, experienced in administration, had been trying to restore musical relations between England and the Continent. Under his sixteen-year-long leadership, the society quickly became the most prestigious and effective organization supporting new music. Performance of a composer's works at a regional meeting of the society was an important step toward recognition, while performance at the society's annual international festivals for long served as general acknowledgment that one was on the way to becoming a ranking composer.

When Krenek joined, the society was too young to count for much, but Dent already knew his work, for the First String Quartet had been played in London on October 14, 1922. In a long letter full of praise he told Krenek that the British had no idea that such music existed but that Krenek's skill with counterpoint had made a strong impression. At the time this letter reached him, Krenek was helping to organize a group called the International Composers Guild. He and his associates thought that the United States (about which they knew nothing) would be responsive to progressive music, and, bemused by their enthusiasm, they looked down on ISCM because, among other things, it regarded Schreker as a modernist. But the guild's first concert, which took place in November, was so unadventurous and poorly performed that Krenek resigned in disgust. Soon afterward he joined ISCM.

He was no happier there, however. Some of his fellow directors were hostile to Bekker, who knew this and was hurt. Krenek tried to improve relations, but in the spring of 1923 the other directors issued a polemic against Bekker that Krenek regarded as unauthorized, and he withdrew from the board in protest. For the next few years he had little or no association with the society, although his String Quartet no. 3, op. 20, which he composed for the Amar Quartet and dedicated to Paul Hindemith, the group's violist and leader, was performed at the 1923 festival in Salzburg, and other works of his were presented at the festivals of 1924 and 1925. Thereafter, nothing of his except for symphonic fragments from his opera *Karl V*, played at the 1936 festival in Barcelona, was heard at the society's international gatherings, even though he resumed an active membership in the society in the late twenties, was a leader in the Austrian chapter, and served as its delegate at meetings abroad. Still later he founded the Minneapolis chapter with Mitropoulos and Louis Krasner, and his works were occasionally performed at its meetings and other regional gatherings. But those who organized the programs of the international festivals ignored him. As the years would show, Krenek was not an effective advocate of

his own interests, and without the sponsorship of someone like Schünemann or, later, Mitropoulos, he was likely to be passed over in favor of the more gregarious, such as Milhaud and Hába, or the more tireless in self-promotion, such as Hindemith. His lifelong shyness and reserve would limit the recognition that he so yearned for, and in the years to come he suffered many disappointments which he hid behind a manner of self-depreciating irony.

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After the sensation at Kassel Krenek did not want to return to Berlin, for although he had enjoyed its salons and theaters and his rambles through its suburbs with Dr. Barczynski, he disliked the city itself. He was appalled by inflation, now completely out of control. In January, French and Belgian troops had occupied the Ruhr district in retaliation for Germany's failure to make even token payments on its war debts, and the Germans had adopted a policy of passive resistance that brought the economy to a standstill, making life in Berlin bleak and dispiriting. Passing through the city in August on his way to a vacation at Vent in the Tirol, Krenek found that a meager lunch now cost four to five hundred thousand marks. As he wrote to his parents, it was "high time to flee this miserable land." From Vent he journeyed to Vienna for a visit with them, after which he returned to the villa near Semmering where he had worked on *Zwingburg* the previous summer. Despite great discomfort brought on by unusually bitter autumn weather, he was glad to be out of Germany as the mark sank to the level of 4.2 trillion to the dollar, martial law was established, and an obscure ex-corporal named Hitler attempted a putsch, which failed ignominiously but brought him national attention. Ironically, in Berlin the arts had never been livelier. Somehow the theaters, cabarets, and concert halls flourished in the midst of ruin, and throughout the German-speaking regions of Central Europe young poets, playwrights, actors, and musicians set out for Berlin at the very time that Krenek had chosen to remove himself from that center of activity.

But he was not forgotten. Scherchen had recently settled in the small Swiss city of Winterthur, where he had been made director of its five-hundred-year-old Musikkollegium and conductor of the affiliated orchestra, which he quickly made one of the finest in Europe. In December 1923 he gave the premiere of Krenek's Piano Concerto no. 1, op. 18, which Krenek had composed while still working on his second opera and his two new quartets. Erdmann was chosen as soloist, and Krenek attended the final rehearsals and the performance. While in Winterthur he met through Scherchen a composer and theorist named Ernst Georg Wolff, who lived in a nearby village and had once studied with Schönberg and Scherchen. Brilliant, eccentric, and endowed with an exceptional sense of humor, Wolff was a delightful conversationalist and companion. He composed very little, for he was occupied with developing a theory of music that involved long hours analyzing chords at the piano. Krenek was baffled by the theory, but he and Wolff liked each

other immediately, and so that Krenek might extend his stay in Switzerland, Wolff obtained for him a Christmas gift of a thousand Swiss francs, at that time a very considerable sum.

The donor was Werner Reinhart, the backer of Scherchen's orchestra and one of four brothers who owned Volkart, an international import-export firm established by their grandfather. Winterthur, situated fifteen miles northeast of Zürich, was proud of its independent cultural life, which was made possible by the generosity of the Reinhart family. Georg, the only married brother, ran the business and through its connections accumulated a collection of craft art noted especially for its elegant pieces from India and China. Hans was a poet and translator who had prepared the German text for Stravinsky's *L'histoire du soldat*. Oskar collected drawings and paintings of the Baroque, nineteenth century, and contemporary periods, and his holdings were among the finest in private hands anywhere on the Continent; eventually they were given to the city, in whose two museums they formed the cores of the collections. Werner had devoted himself to music and had acquired some competence on the clarinet. His true calling, however, was to be a patron of avant-garde composers, of whom he supported many, though with such discretion that their number has never been known. He helped Stravinsky when the latter settled in Switzerland during the First World War, and after the *Anschluss* he offered to care for Webern if that composer wished to leave Austria, though nothing came of this. Because he was so self-effacing and so careful to avoid giving offense, it was difficult to determine just how great his understanding and liking of truly progressive music was, although it was certain that he enjoyed Stravinsky's Neoclassical works and had great respect for Schönberg. He also respected Wolff, even though Wolff was unknown, and relied on his judgment. Therefore he readily accepted Wolff's suggestion that he provide Krenek with enough money to live in Switzerland for two years so that he could "study" with Wolff.

Krenek was prepared to like Switzerland and the Swiss as much as he disliked Berlin. He had visited St. Moritz a few days before Christmas and declared in a letter to his parents that it was the most beautiful place he had ever seen, which is not surprising given his love from childhood of mountains and mountain scenery. Now came this remarkable offer of patronage with only the loosest of strings, for in making it Reinhart suggested simply that Krenek consult with Wolff, probably in the hope that this would be good for Wolff's morale. This Krenek was happy to do, even though he continued to find Wolff's theory of music incomprehensible. Therefore, in January 1924 he decided to emigrate to Switzerland. It was the final break with the world of Schreker, Schünemann, Schneider, and the rest, to which he never returned. Late in the month he took rooms in Winterthur and began looking for a place to live in Zürich. He had not come alone.

3 · COMEDY AND CONFUSION: 1924 – 1926

Late in February 1922, about a month before he began work on his Second Symphony, Ernst Krenek did something quite out of character. A strike by the Berlin utility and transportation workers had just ended, and heat and light had been restored. Despite the hardships wrought by inflation, the Music Academy students were in a carnival mood and managed to talk Krenek into joining them at a Fasching (pre-Lenten) ball put on by students of the nearby Arts Academy. Irene Erdmann helped him assemble an appropriately foolish costume, and Krenek set off for the ball feeling very self-conscious and uncertain about how much he wished to join in the revelry. In the end, he was so captivated that he did not leave until nearly seven o'clock the following morning.

There was a reason. "I spent the entire evening with the daughter of Gustav Mahler," he wrote to his parents. "She was married to a conductor and baron or something, but she cannot obtain a divorce because she is only seventeen years old. She is here in Berlin to learn to paint. She is very musical and intelligent, so we had a very good time."¹ She was all of that and much more, and their friendship prospered. Late in April he invited her to join Fritz Demuth and himself at the final rehearsal of his Second String Quartet before its premiere by the Havemann Quartet; he may also have asked her to accompany him to the premiere of his First Symphony in mid-March. Soon they were deeply in love, and when he finished his Second Symphony in May he dedicated it to her. Within a month they were lovers.

The second child of Gustav and Alma Schindler Mahler, Anna was born in Vienna on June 15, 1904, and because she had such great blue eyes was nicknamed "Guck-erl" ("Little Peeper") or "Gucki" for short. A beautiful, lively little girl, she was much loved and fussed over, but often neglected by her tempestuous parents, who would leave her in the care of her maternal grandmother while they hurried about

the Continent or overseas to New York. When her older sister died they began to pay more attention to her but did not slow the pace of their lives, so that in Vienna or Manhattan she was tossed about in the ebb and flow of opening nights and receptions, women fawning on her famous father and men paying court to her coquettish mother. After Mahler's death in the spring of 1911, she witnessed the progress of her mother's affair with Oskar Kokoschka and brief marriage to Walter Gropius and secretly hoped that she, too, would be sought after by gifted and famous men. In 1920 she married Rupert Koller, a handsome, agreeable, but doltish minor Austrian aristocrat whom she encouraged to become a symphony conductor. For a short time he did indeed direct a remote provincial orchestra, most of the expenses of which he paid for himself. But it was soon plain that he had no musical ability at all, and Anna left him to study painting. Her grandfather, Jakob Emil Schindler, had been a well-known landscape painter, and, as time would show, she had inherited much of his talent. When Krenek met her, she was very pretty, though not the beauty she would become, and full of vivacity, love of fun, and jealousy of her mother. She was also very strong-willed and determined. She swept him off his feet.

His infatuation was obvious to the Erdmanns, who liked Anna (or "Anni," as Krenek had taken to calling her). When they obtained use for the summer of a seaside villa near Lütjenburg on the Baltic Sea, they invited the young lovers to join them, and it was there that Krenek completed the orchestration of his Second Symphony and began composing the music for *Zwingsburg*. His evenings were often spent learning English, which Irene Erdmann could read and Anna, after her childhood days in New York, could speak a little.

Late in July, Krenek's Symphonic Music for Nine Instruments, op. 11, was given its first performance under Scherchen at the second Donaueschingen festival. Immediately afterward Krenek and Anna spent a week hiking in the Tirol, where she painted landscapes, before heading for Vienna and a quick visit with Krenek's parents and on to Breitenstein, Alma Mahler's summer home among picturesque mountains near Semmering. It had been designed by an American architect for Mahler, who loved the area but died before work on it began. When Alma's affair with Kokoschka attracted unwanted attention in Vienna, they decided to retire from the city and go ahead with construction. Unfortunately, because the architect had never visited the area, his plans were entirely unsuited to it, for they failed to take into account the wet and windy character of the site. Thus the house was often bitterly cold in spite of a great fireplace, over which Kokoschka painted a fresco depicting his mistress and himself rising from flames (it was destroyed by Russian troops during the Second World War). When they separated, Frau Mahler continued to use the house in the summer, and she was in residence with her current lover (and later husband), the poet and playwright Franz Werfel, when her daughter arrived with her own partner.

Werfel, who had just finished his first novel, based on the life of Verdi, looked over the libretto of *Zwingburg*, approved its political sentiments, and undertook to touch up its language.² By mid-September Krenek had finished composing, but not scoring, the opera, and a month later he and Anna returned to Berlin, where they lived with Erdmann's mother. They thought her an "old dragon," Krenek remembers, but they were grateful that she made no fuss about their liaison. Krenek's parents, too, accepted it. They had liked Anna at once—everyone seemed to fall under her spell—and concluded that their son had reached the age when he should do as he thought best, though they would have been happier if the young couple had married after Anna obtained a divorce while in Vienna.

Ernst's parents might have been less accommodating if they had perceived the degree to which Anna, for all her charm, embodied attitudes and a way of life wholly at odds with their own; if they had understood her measure of mischievousness, irreverence, indifference to the opinions of others, and even personal recklessness. Certainly life with her was changing their son, whom she drew away from his desk to share the amusements she enjoyed, thereby succeeding where Petyrek had failed. In March they again went to the art students' ball, and Krenek, dressed in a costume Anna had created for him, once more enjoyed himself thoroughly. But far more indicative of the changes taking place in him was the farcical libretto that he had written during the previous autumn for his second opera, *Der Sprung über den Schatten* (The leap over the shadow, op. 17). In it he made fun of respectability and celebrated the abandoning of oneself to impulse, however improper. Revealing, too, was the character of the score, which he finished early in April, for it was not only tonal but replete with fox-trots and scenes resembling the Fasching balls he attended with Anna (see Chapter 4).

With the advantage of hindsight one can see that such an apparently unlikely act as creating this comic opera was not uncharacteristic of Krenek after all. Deep within the studious only child of sober, middle-class parents, the earnest young classicist, the rather doctrinaire young modernist, was a jester who delighted in paradoxes, satire, tricks, and puzzles, an iconoclast pleased by the unconcern for propriety of Mahler's music and by the scorn for convention of his daughter, who was bringing the jester to light. This side of Krenek had showed itself in *Skorpion*, in the way Krenek had made a conspicuous display of reading the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, in his relish for the uproars provoked by his First String Quartet and Second Symphony. It reappeared vividly in a prank that he and Erdmann devised in June 1922 while he and Anna were staying with the Erdmanns: He composed a toccata and chaconne, which he dedicated to Erdmann, and a few days later he composed a little suite of variations on the same material, which he dedicated to Irene Erdmann in honor of her birthday; in the titles he indicated that the material was based on a chorale, "Ja ich glaub an Jesum Christum." When Erdmann gave the premiere performances in Berlin the following October, the prim burghers were indignant at

the supposed irreverence of a waltz and a fox-trot in the suite—"supposed," for no such chorale existed: Erdmann had invented the name. He and Krenek protested their innocence and asked that the music be judged on its merits apart from any source. The critics, whom they wished most to tease, were completely taken in, especially since they should have realized from the chaconne's construction that it could not be based on any chorale, real or imaginary.

Yet now the prankster was coming around to wanting to be popular, in part because, there being as yet no patron in view, he and Anna needed any money his music might bring in. It was clear that a work such as the Second Symphony would yield virtually nothing. Krenek would be pleased now if audiences laughed at his tricks and eccentricities rather than taking umbrage and railing against them. So in *Sprung* he set out to be satirical but amusing, sardonic but entertaining. One might say that he wanted to please an audience made up of people unlike his parents and their friends but like Anna and her friends. In the polarity of the sober classicist and the merry prankster one can glimpse a cleavage that had already appeared in Krenek's contradictory social and political sympathies, and would reappear again and again throughout the years in both his behavior and his music.

. . . .

Following the premiere of the Second Symphony on June 11, 1923, Krenek and Anna went again to stay with the Erdmanns, this time at their home in Langballigau in the former principality of Schleswig. There Krenek finished the music, but not the instrumentation, of his third opera, *Orpheus und Eurydike*, op. 21, the most beautiful of his aronal works, for which he used as a libretto a powerful but bewildering Expressionist play by Oskar Kokoschka (see Chapter 4). With this done, he and Anna returned to the Tirol to go hiking, paid a visit to Krenek's parents in Vienna, and then, to save money, settled in at Breitenstein. Despite bitter weather, they remained there until December, when they journeyed to Winterthur for the Erdmann-Scherchen premiere of Krenek's First Piano Concerto. It was then that Krenek received the grant from Werner Reinhart to enable him to commune with Wolff. Assured of an income, Krenek and Anna were married in mid-January 1924 in a civil ceremony at Vienna City Hall. Anna planned to study painting with Cuno Amiet once they found a place to live in Zürich.

In March they moved into a *pension* on the shore of Lake Zürich. For a time they amused themselves with buying furniture and arranging it about their rooms, but outside the weather was cold and gray, and the view from their windows, which should have been magnificent, was often leaden and oppressive, making Anna long for sunshine and Italy, her favorite country. Krenek did not mind the dreariness so much, for he had his work and he enjoyed the parties they went to, which were not her kind at all. The food was lavish and very rich, and the people very solemn. The prankster had vanished as Krenek reverted to the decorum out of which Anna and

their friends in Berlin had teased him. She had not really wanted them to marry but consented because Krenek had been so troubled by the impropriety of their liaison. Now as they sat at the dinner table in their *pension*, everything was proper; Krenek was at ease, but she wanted to scream or throw something just to break the staid hush. Painting alone could not compensate for the carefree student's life in Berlin for which she yearned. In May they visited her mother in Venice, where Frau Mahler had purchased a home. Despite the discomfort of an extremely hot, damp spell and her desire to escape her mother's dominance, Anna stayed on while Krenek went to Frankfurt to attend rehearsals of *Sprung*, soon to be premiered by the company that had failed to produce *Zwingburg* in 1923 as planned. It was during one of these rehearsals that Krenek met Adorno, whom he disliked at first, finding the young man's nervous excitement and strained volubility difficult to tolerate; Adorno, however, voiced his admiration of the opera to Krenek and extravagantly praised the Second Symphony. Anna joined her husband for the opening on June 9 of this first opera of his to be performed, and all went well under the direction of Ludwig Rotenberg. The audience was pleased, but, for all its intended irreverence, *Sprung* was too conventional to make much of an impression and too bland to score a hit. Still, it showed that Krenek could write both a libretto and music that entertained a general audience. It remained to be seen if, once back in prim Zürich, he would even try.

He and Anna returned to that city and spent most of the summer of 1924 in and around it. By now their marriage was in serious trouble. In September, Anna escaped to Venice while Krenek journeyed to Berlin, where he visited the Erdmanns and discussed arrangements for a forthcoming production of *Zwingburg* at the State Opera under Erich Kleiber. On his way back he paid a visit to Bekker and stopped in nearby Darmstadt to see his old friend Goering, now very ill with tuberculosis. Early in October he arrived back in Zürich, where he and Anna took a new apartment. Their gramophone played fox-trots all day, he told his parents—but this did not lighten the hours for bored and lonely Anna. They were pleased at the critical acclaim accorded *Zwingburg* when it opened on October 21, but the good news came too late to help their relationship. On November 13, Anna left for Rome to study painting under Giorgio de Chirico. They had not quarreled over this decision, but Krenek knew that the marriage was over. He initiated the proceedings for a divorce, which was granted early in December.

They remained good friends, concerned for each other's well-being. Alone in Rome, Anna needed letters, and Krenek asked his friends to write to her. And when he spoke of her in the weeks that followed, he never recriminated. They had been young, ambitious, lonely, and ultimately, incompatible, even though they had thought they had found what they desired in each other. For Anna, the goal had been union with an artist of genius, with whom she could take her place in the glamorous world of her parents on her own terms and with no indebtedness to her mother. For Krenek, it had been the excitement of going about with an attractive

woman who with her assurance and vivacity opened realms that the impish side of him, so long scarcely visible, greatly enjoyed. But these realms were not to be found in the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland; thus, when he chose to leave exciting Berlin for staid Zürich, he reinforced the other, more familiar side of his nature, the side that was reserved and decorous, that had insisted on marriage, and so ensured the ultimate failure of their relationship. Even though everyone liked Anna, his Zürich friends could not really be her friends. And while his music prospered, her art was going nowhere.* As she said many years later, "It [the move to Zürich] ended the marriage."³

. . .

At first numbed by shock, Krenek nonetheless tried to reassure his parents that the separation was for the best and that he was coping with the confusion it wrought. One way to do so was to get away from their apartment with all its reminders of Anna. He set off for Berlin for the premiere of his Third Symphony under Scherchen and then, on the pretext that he needed to consult Kokoschka about the *Orpheus und Eurydike* libretto, went on to Paris, where the painter-playwright was then living. He remained for nearly two weeks.

The effect of the city was stunning. It was, he wrote to Bekker, as if he had journeyed "to another planet." Often in dreams he had visited this "magical city," and now he found it "unerhört!!!"—unprecedented, scandalous, exorbitant.⁴ Truly, visitors to Paris in the mid-twenties found a magical city, one seething with energy, ideas, colors, sounds, fads, triumphs, and trumpery. For scholars and literati it was the Paris of the Sorbonne, the Bibliothèque Nationale, Bergson, Proust, Gide, Maritain, Maurras, and the great journals. For young expatriates from America it was the Paris of Gertrude Stein, Joyce, Pound, the *Transatlantic Review*, the Fontainebleau School of Music, and the studio of Nadia Boulanger. For one kind of art student it meant Picasso and the Cubists; for another, the post-Impressionists and Vlaminck, Dufy, and Rouault; for still another, Duchamp, Dada, and Surrealism. For the tourist it was a quick trip through the Louvre, a view of the Eiffel Tower, the Folies Bergère, and a round of cafés and bars where on a good night one might catch a glimpse of the Prince of Wales. Visitors saw what they had come prepared to see.

Anna had helped to prepare Krenek, and now, having lost her, he did just what she would have most enjoyed in a city certain to please her: he went out every night,

*Anna's art began to prosper as soon as they parted. Shortly afterward she switched from painting to sculpture and returned to Vienna, where she studied with Fritz Wotruba. Recognition was long delayed by the *Anschluss*, the war, and emigration to the United States; not until the fifties, when she was teaching at the University of California, Los Angeles, was her work exhibited in a gallery of any standing. In time she came to specialize in portrait sculpture and achieved wide praise for her heads of composers, particularly those of Schönberg and Krenek, the latter of which is now in the City Museum in Vienna. She died in London in June 1988 just before a great retrospective exhibition of her sculpture was to open in Salzburg.

to the theater, the ballet, the opera, the revues, and was captivated by what he took for the Gallic spirit. What he saw was, like the Paris of any other short-time visitor, a mythic thing, half reality and half poster—or, in his case, half reality and half theatrical cliché, its *citoyen* an acrobat, juggler, and mountebank. His Paris was compounded of the Opéra-Comique and l'Odéon; of Rolland's comedy *Dr. Knock*, starring Louis Jouvet, which delighted him; of vaudeville and revues; of the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, Picasso's sets, Fokine's choreography; of the music of Stravinsky and Les Six; and of the spectacles over which hovered the spirit of Jean Cocteau, the Ultimate Acrobat and Dissembler who was to have an influence on Krenek not unlike that of Karl Kraus.

Although he was only thirty-five when Krenek came to Paris, Cocteau had long been a public figure associated by his many admirers and enemies with the ballet, avant-garde poetry and music, jazz, haute couture, unceasing frivolity, and a carnival world of clowns, fireworks, and fancy-dress balls. In 1916 he had conceived a spectacle that epitomized the attitudes he expressed in his writing. This was *Parade*, which opened before an especially fashionable audience on May 18, 1918, with music by Satie, sets and costumes by Picasso, and "Cubist" choreography by Massine. The action involved a Chinese conjurer, some acrobats, and an American girl who perform a series of turns at a Sunday street fair set in Paris. The style was deliberately provocative, mixing farce, dandyism, and Cubist grotesqueries in a manner that Apollinaire described with a new term: *Surréalisme*. Cocteau's friends accepted the entertainment as it was intended, as just a bit of harmless flippancy, but the general public, all too aware of the frightful slaughter in the trenches, was greatly offended, and a tumult of boos and flying fists broke out as soon as the curtain fell. Diaghilev canceled further performances, but *Parade* established Cocteau as the spokesman of a new movement in the arts characterized by bittersweet gaiety, irreverence, parodies, ambivalence, and an all-embracing irony. Soon he published a manifesto entitled *Le coq et l'arlequin* (The cock and the harlequin), which praised Satie's "New Music" for its simplicity in comparison with the music of Wagner, Debussy, and Ravel; welcomed the spirit of jazz, which was just becoming known in Paris; and called attention to the music of Georges Auric, Darius Milhaud, and other *nouveaux jeunes* who were known to admire Satie. This was followed in 1919 by two columns in the paper *Paris-Midi* in which Cocteau praised the wit, simplicity, and French spirit of Auric, Milhaud, Arthur Honegger, Francis Poulenc, Germaine Tailleferre, and Louis Durey, who were soon referred to as "Les Six" after the model of the "Russian Five." But although Cocteau was their constant companion (he even sat in as the drummer when, in their off-hours, Auric, Poulenc, and Milhaud played jazz at a local bar), he was not their leader, as has commonly been supposed, nor did he furnish them with an aesthetic, for they were too individualistic to share one. They set his poems to music, and Milhaud and Cocteau collaborated on a farcical musical pantomime, set in a bar in an American city, entitled *Le boeuf sur le*

toit (The ox on the roof), which opened for four performances in February 1920. These were so popular that a bar with that name opened in Paris and at once became the gathering place of the smart set. Contrary to rumor, Cocteau did not own this bar, but he was a regular visitor and his spirit was always in attendance throughout its legendary existence.⁵

On May 15, 1920, just a few months after the performances of *Le boeuf sur le toit*, the Ballets Russes presented Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, with choreography by Massine and sets by Picasso. This ballet portrayed the epitome of this spectacular world with its punchinello theme, its fair as background, its mocking parody and musical jokes, its compositional clarity and openness, its delight in brilliant craftsmanship seemingly thrown away on trivial material. Because he based the score on music supposed at the time to have been written by Pergolesi and used an old Neapolitan comedy for his story line, this new phase of his music was dubbed Neoclassicism. And because Les Six were perceived as belonging to the Diaghilev-Cocteau-Stravinsky community and because of certain similarities between their works and Stravinsky's (tonality moving into and out of polytonality, the development of a single theme, dance and march rhythms, the use of small ensembles emphasizing woodwinds, return to the concerto grosso, the subjects—all those fairs and parades—and anti-Romantic treatment), it became customary to refer to Les Six as Neoclassicists, too, although they were never so much so as Stravinsky in the sense of using materials from the Classical age. ("Handel with wrong notes," Krenek called it.) What matters here is not the precise measure of how much a particular composer was or was not a Neoclassicist but rather a set of attitudes toward music, the audience, and the world at large that emphasized diverting a sophisticated listener with cleverness, elegant simplicity, and musical banter. Indeed, the attitudes, so preeminently Cocteau's, preceded the broad stylistic features. That is, because they shared the attitudes, the so-called Neoclassicists tended to resort to the same means, which had already proven effective in communicating those attitudes, and this in turn led to stylistic resemblances.

The prevailing spirit of parody and persiflage delighted Krenek when he reached Paris. Through Kokoschka he met Milhaud, Honegger, and Poulenc, of whom he had heard but whose works he did not know. They did not talk about music, but he found their company exceptionally agreeable. He was charmed by their point of view, for which he had been prepared by his first encounter with Stravinsky shortly before he arrived in Paris. Prior to meeting Stravinsky he had known his name but had been almost wholly unacquainted with his music and its evolution since the war. Though they were widely discussed, Krenek had never heard or seen the scores of *Le sacre du printemps* (The rite of spring) and *Petrushka*. He did hear a new work of Stravinsky's in Berlin during the autumn of 1922 and reported to his parents that it was "a charming humbug" but neglected to mention its title, which later he could not recall. Though it was not meant as a compliment, this observation was not

without acuity, for Stravinsky's music belonged to a world brought together by Diaghilev: a world of ballet that was at moments nearly circus; of Picasso's imagery of harlequins, acrobats, mandolins, and guitars; of visual and musical puns, ambivalence, skepticism, and an all-suffusing irony.

Krenek's first meeting with Stravinsky took place late in November 1924 at the home of their mutual patron, Werner Reinhart. By now he had heard some of Stravinsky's music, including a suite derived from the score of *Pulcinella*. He had even composed early in 1924 before moving from Winterthur to Zürich his Concerto Grosso no. 2, op. 25, which resembled Neoclassicism in going back to Baroque models in its form and texture, although its idiom continued in the line of his Second Symphony. Hearing the *Pulcinella* suite had been, he later wrote, "an exhilarating experience." Now to that was added the experience of hearing in Winterthur Stravinsky's recently completed Piano Concerto in its premiere performance, with the composer at the piano; a few days later he heard it again in Geneva. It made on him, he wrote to Paul Bekker, an "almost terrifying, astonishing, and elementary impression," which was reinforced by his conversations with Stravinsky immediately after the performance.⁶ In all these encounters, Krenek was being made especially open to the impact of Paris, for which he had already been somewhat prepared by life with Anna and by his attempt in *Sprung* to compose a sportive farce to entertain rather than startle the audience. Reflecting in later years on his response to what he termed "the seemingly carefree, unspeculative, straightforward music of my French contemporaries," he observed: "Needless to say, I was moved to take note of these characteristics in the first place because I was inwardly ready to be swayed in a similar direction and only waited to find the proper influence."⁷

And swayed he was. "I believe," he wrote to Bekker on his return to Zürich, "that my sojourn in Paris will have a wholly decisive significance for me." The ideas of Milhaud and Honegger had helped to convince him that in Paris "people understand what we never knew or have long forgotten: [how] to *live*." In that city, art occupied a wholly different position from that to which he was accustomed. Each day he had seen and heard things that, had they been performed in Frankfurt, would have disgusted him. He was convinced, as he put it, "that my absolutism will slowly but surely be cured."⁸

What he meant by "absolutism" seems to have been a combination of his efforts to be as advanced as possible; his indifference toward, or even willful attempts to affront, the general listener; and his tendency to adhere rigidly to a system such as he had surmised in Kurth's writings on linearity. Perhaps, too, he was thinking of the violent passion of his Second Symphony and of Kokoschka's text for *Orpheus und Eurydike*, which contrasted so sharply with the light gaiety of Paris. He had come to the city with some hope that he might arouse interest in a French premiere for the opera, but he quickly dropped the idea because he was convinced that no one would understand it.

Besides, he had discovered a very different writer. He was so entertained when he read a bit of Cocteau that he immediately purchased everything of his in print at the time. And once home he set about familiarizing himself with the recent works of Stravinsky, whom he had seen again on the way back and found extremely compatible, and with the music of Les Six, toward whom he now felt a strong kinship. As he recounted in later years,

My impression of France caused a complete about-face in my artistic outlook. . . . I was fascinated by what appeared to me the happy equilibrium, perfect poise, grace, elegance, and clarity which I thought I perceived in the French music of that period, as well as in the relations of French musicians with their public. I decided that the tenets which I had followed so far in writing "modern" music were totally wrong. Music, according to my new philosophy, had to fit the well-defined demands of the community for which it was written; it had to be useful, entertaining, practical.⁹

An immediate consequence was the resolve "to write something once directly *for Paris*."¹⁰ And therein, it can now be seen, lay the beginning of *Jonny spielt auf*, which he began to sketch (but did not entitle) early in 1925. Nonetheless, as the finished work would show, while *Jonny* was certainly "useful, entertaining, and practical" and displayed some of the qualities he admired in the music of Les Six, it was not Neoclassical (other forces were now at work), and the style and tone of the libretto he wrote were more in keeping with the spirit of Feydeau and Guitry than that of Cocteau.

In fact, Krenek wrote few Neoclassical works, perhaps no more than half a dozen. (Musicologists sometimes refer to a Neoclassical "period" for him that covered as many as twenty works beginning with his Fourth String Quartet, but this seems to be far removed from even the broadest definition of the term.) He himself sees some resemblances with Neoclassical works in his Second Concerto Grosso; and of his Concertino for Flute, Violin, Harpsichord, and String Orchestra, op. 27, which he composed late in 1924 after falling under the spell of the *Pulcinella* suite, he has written that he went further, "imitating more closely the style of the early eighteenth century, reminiscing on the tonal language of that period and playfully employing some of its mannerisms. This is probably as close as I would ever come to the more obvious patterns of Neoclassicism."¹¹ *Drei lustige Märsche* (Three merry marches, op. 44, spring 1926), parodies a village band in somewhat the manner of Stravinsky's *Mavra*, and there are similar parodistic elements in *Potpourri für Orchester*, op. 54 (spring 1927). *Kleine Sinfonie* (Little symphony, op. 58, spring 1928) is the last work to contain hints of Neoclassicism, especially in its use of a mandolin, which recalls an archetypal symbol used by Cocteau and Picasso; but the mandolin also recalls Schönberg's *Serenade*, the second work in which he employed the twelve-tone technique.

Neoclassic or not, these are very minor works in the Krenek canon. Playful,

cunningly fabricated, and in places downright funny, they show in abundance the qualities that Krenek admired in *Pulcinella* and *Le boeuf sur le toit*, and one is grateful that they exist. But in the long view their significance is not so much in their intrinsic merits as in what they reveal of Krenek's musical development and artistic nature. For in them he returns to the tonality of his pre-Berlin student works such as the *Serenade* of 1919 (which itself had certain Neoclassical features, even though that idiom had not yet come into being). As will be seen, however, other forces were turning him in that direction as well, and he might have gone back to tonality (as, briefly, he had when seeking to please with *Sprung*) even without his sojourn in Paris. Far more important for the years and works to come was the full emergence of the whimsical side of Krenek's personality—of a *comédien* who might have taken his turn at the drums with Auric and Milhaud, the antithesis of the composer of the First and Second String Quartets and the Second Symphony. This *comédien* would show himself in many of Krenek's essays and in the operas *Schwergewicht, oder Die Ehre der Nation* (Heavyweight, or The pride of the nation, 1927), *What Price Confidence?* (1946), *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* (Computed and confounded, 1961), and *Der goldene Bock* (The golden ram, 1963), as well as in the declamations to music *They Knew What They Wanted* (1977) and *The Dissembler* (1979), all works for which Krenek wrote his own texts. The opposition and oscillation between this jester and a portentous sacristan, the very theme of *Jonny*, were henceforth to be among the most rudimentary and definitive principles of Krenek's imagination, music, and life.

. . .

The *comédien* was not visible when Krenek returned to Zürich on December 10, 1924. The weather was dreary. His friends, who had liked Anna, though she had found them tiresome, were awkward in their expressions of sympathy, and their attitudes sometimes seemed ambiguous to him. The apartment, so recently acquired and furnished with a big "American" desk and a telephone, of which he had been especially proud, was unbearable. Just two months earlier he had urged his parents to visit him and Anna in their grand new quarters; now he hastened to find another place to live. One comfort was a new friend, a Swiss journalist of his own age named Friedrich (Fritz) Gubler. Kokoschka, who had known Gubler since he was a boy of fifteen, had introduced him to Krenek, who relished their pleasantly distracting conversations.

Work, too, gave relief. Back in March, Hertzka, ever on the lookout for opportunities for "his" composers, had sent him a copy of *Bluff*, an English farce by George Gribble about cloping to Gretna Green, with the suggestion that Krenek turn it into an operetta. Though often regarded as vulgar, operettas were enjoying an upsurge of popularity among people who found most new operas confusing and depressing. They also made money, which Krenek needed despite Reinhart's gen-

crous gift and some royalties from the Berlin production of *Zwingburg*. He thought he might use it, so Hertzka turned the play over to Karl M. von Levetzow, an elderly Austrian count who had done jobs like this before, to work up an operetta libretto, and Krenek soon began making sketches for *Bluff*. After his return from Paris he decided to make a real Viennese operetta of it and got down to serious work. At the same time, he completed a sonata for solo violin for Alma Moodie, a young Australian protégée of Reinhardt's who had become a close friend, her sympathy offsetting some of his loneliness,¹² and a lovely tonal work, not in the least Neoclassical, for a mixed a cappella chorus and using poems by Hölderlin, entitled *Die Jahreszeiten* (The seasons).

Even as he composed these and tinkered with *Bluff*, Krenek had begun noting down ideas for what would become *Jonny*. This project interested him much more than the operetta, but thinking that he had better finish the latter promptly and that a change of scene would improve his spirits, he set off to consult von Levetzow, who lived in Prunete Cervione, a village on the east coast of Corsica, with a young man, his "adopted son," who claimed to be the descendant of a general of the Venetian Republic. Arriving late in February 1925, Krenek pressed forward with *Bluff*, giving only occasional attention to his still-untitled project. The haughty though impoverished count and his extravagant young companion provided much amusement but little help, which Krenek really did not need; in fact, things were going so well that by early April he could report to his parents that the operetta was finished, by which he meant the piano-vocal version. This he sent to Universal Edition, where it was well liked, for it had some catchy songs (including one about escaping by railroad to a glamorous new life, an idea that figures in the ending of *Jonny*). But this was supposed to be a *Viennese* operetta, and one indispensable element was a song about Old Vienna, which the publishers pointed out *Bluff* lacked—though how they thought Levetzow and Krenek could work one into a story about eloping to Scotland is hard to conceive. Krenek was nonplussed when told to include one; he was also by now bored with the whole enterprise. Late in the month he reported to his parents that the "operetta adventure," as he termed it, had been "liquidated."

Still in need of money, he started work on yet another project suggested by Universal Edition: music for a ballet to be called *Mammon*, based on a story conceived by the Hungarian choreographer Béla Balázs, who had written the libretto for Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* and the scenario for his ballet, *The Wooden Prince*. The publishers hoped that *Mammon* would be taken by the ballet company of the Vienna State Opera. At their suggestion Krenek also prepared an adaptation—a condensation and in no way a Neoclassical reworking of the original material—of Rameau's eighteenth-century ballet-opera *Les fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour*, which was retitled *Der vertauschte Cupido* (The substitute Cupid).

Neither was accepted on completion, but the adaptation was performed the fol-

lowing October at the State Opera House in Kassel, and *Mammon* had its premiere in Munich two years later. *Mammon* was not a success with either the audience or the critics. The audience had expected music of the kind that had made *Jonny* (composed after *Mammon* but premiered before it) so much the rage. The best that the critic for the *Bayerische Staatszeitung* could say for a score that he thought treated the orchestral instruments as “mere noisemakers” was that the despicable power of *Mammon* did not deserve to be glorified by beautiful music. Even so, he advised “young tone heroes” such as Krenek to go into the meadows and “learn master melodies from finches and titmice.” The critic for the *München Post* was a bit kinder but thought that even though the story was excellent, the work was no substitute for *Jonny* “or better still for *Orpheus [und Eurydike]*.”¹³

With the abandonment of *Bluff* and Universal Edition’s rejection of *Der vertauschte Cupido* and *Mammon* (it eventually published the latter in a piano transcription for four hands), Krenek’s fortunes reached in the spring of 1925 a low that would have been scarcely imaginable a year before. His disappointment was all the more galling given the successes of Hindemith and Les Six at the festivals and in the press. Even the success of his Second Concerto Grosso at the ISCM festival at Prague in May did little to lift his spirits. Apart from vague hopes for his opera project and for interesting someone in staging *Orpheus und Eurydike*, still unperformed two years after its completion, he had nothing to look forward to. His career, so promising at the outset, seemed to have come to a full stop. But help was on the way. Paul Bekker had the young composer very much in mind.

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Born in Berlin in 1882, Bekker had been trained as a violinist and had begun his career as a member of the Berlin Philharmonic. For more than a decade he had been one of the most perceptive commentators on contemporary music and, by virtue of his position as the principal critic of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, a powerful supporting voice. His marriage to a member of a patrician Frankfurt family that owned a large share of I. G. Farben, the chemical manufacturing company, made him a man of independent means able to write freely about his enthusiasms: the theater, opera, and the music of Mahler, Schreker, and Schönberg. He gained an even better means of furthering his interests when, in May 1924, Leo Kesterberg of the Prussian Ministry of Science, Culture, and Education appointed Bekker director of the State Opera House and Theater in Kassel. There were but three such houses in Prussia, the others being in Berlin and Wiesbaden, and although Kassel was far smaller and less lively than Berlin, this appointment was a considerable honor. Being more than simply a city enterprise, the Kassel State Opera could afford respectable singers and occasionally obtained the services of stars from Berlin. Bekker, however, was more able as a critic and musicologist than as a director. Sensitive and highstrung, he lacked toughness, and all his knowledge of opera did not fully compensate for his

lack of experience. By the time his first year was up he realized that he needed a general assistant. His choice, in view of his shortcomings, was a curious one: he invited Krenek to take the job.

Bekker had written one of the few favorable reviews of Krenek's First String Quartet following its sensational premiere at Nürnberg. He had been instrumental in persuading his friend Werner Wolffheim, following Schünemann's suggestion, to pay for Krenek's second-year tuition at the academy. Krenek and Anna had stayed in his home during the negotiations with Sert over producing *Zwingburg*. And although he had left the Frankfurt paper by the time Krenek's Second Symphony was premiered in Kassel, he wrote a favorable account for *Anbruch*. He and Krenek had liked each other from the start, though during the controversy with the Berlin chapter of the ISCM he thought Krenek's behavior frivolous and equivocal. He was mollified when Krenek resigned his directorship in protest.

A loyal partisan of new music, Bekker was nonetheless troubled by its increasing alienation, and soon Krenek, who had already sought to please the listener in *Sprung*, began to share his concern. Writing to his parents from Breitenstein on October 9, 1923, more than a year before his experience of Paris, he cited Bekker on the social role that music had once had and wondered how music would be able to return, as he put it, "to life." By the next summer, with Paris still months away, he had begun to reconsider the foundations of his own music. On August 16, 1924, he wrote Bekker to thank him for sending a copy of his recently published *Richard Wagner. Das Leben im Werke* (Richard Wagner: His life in his works), which Krenek said he had devoured with enthusiasm, admiring especially its clarity of presentation. He also reported that he had been experimenting with harmony, counterpoint, and meter, with mostly negative results (but not wholly, as may be seen in the three lovely songs for mezzo-soprano, clarinet, and string quartet, op. 30a, that he composed at this time using French texts by the Belgian poet Emile Verhaeren). Studying Beethoven's music had impressed him with the rightness and inevitability of its formal organization: every note, he believed, was justified and necessary. (He had thought the same of Schubert's songs when analyzing them under Erdmann's tutelage.) But contemporary music, he wrote, lacks "necessity." The linearity principle, which had been so influential for his own music, had, he believed, brought about a period of wild irresponsibility because composers took too seriously the notion that harmonies would result from the unforeseen conjunction of notes brought together by linearity.

Krenek named no composers, but probably only Schönberg had been as devoted (for his own reasons) to linearity. Working with his newly developed twelve-tone system, Schönberg never supposed that it would produce harmonies; moreover, because the earliest account of the system had yet to be given to outsiders, Krenek could not have known about it. That Krenek had his own works somewhat in mind is suggested by his next words: "I see the value of this way of thinking only in the

loosening of our harmonic perceptions—because the ‘accidents’ that we tolerate at this time are there and should become building stones. . . . The danger against which I must guard myself with particular care is lapsing into the petrifications of a system.” Systems, he said, were easy enough to find. What was difficult to find was a *method*, whereby one chose from accidental material or material selected entirely as a matter of taste the right and only possible note that permitted a flowing continuity. He wanted some means of organizing musical material such as composers formerly had in triad harmony, but a means that was *universally* (he underlined the word to stress its importance) applicable. His argument was somewhat convoluted and his terms imprecise, but the tenor of his remarks is clear and shows that he was as ready intellectually to respond to Stravinsky, Les Six, and Paris as he had been emotionally. His about-face was perhaps less abrupt than it seemed even to himself.

Bekker made his offer of an assistantship at the State Opera by telegram in late May or early June 1925, when Krenek was still working on *Mammon*. The message followed him from Zürich to Munich to Freiburg to Basel and was finally conveyed by telephone to Ascona, a Swiss village on the north shore of Lake Maggiore not far from Locarno. Discouraged and melancholy despite his beautiful surroundings, Krenek wrote to Bekker on June 8, saying that Bekker needed someone of vigor and all-out commitment, which he could not promise. Therefore his answer had to be no. “Truly,” he concluded, “it makes me *very* sad that it won’t work. I thank you from my heart for having thought of me and wish you . . . all the best in your undertaking.” But Bekker was not to be put off. He at once sent another telegram, which must have been singularly persuasive, for Krenek changed his mind and on June 17 wrote to say that he accepted the post. As he was not required to report to Kassel until September, Krenek spent the summer in the Tirol reading endlessly about the theater, sketching background music for Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s play *La vida es sueño* (Life is a dream), which was scheduled at Kassel for the coming year, and working with new energy on *Jonny*.¹⁴

He had not wanted to accept the job, but the salary, though modest, was adequate, and he was in such financial straits that he had to take it. He disliked leaving Switzerland for Germany and giving up his freedom. He had no high regard for Kassel after the treatment of his Second Symphony by the local musicians, and despite all the reading he had done he worried greatly about his lack of experience. Apprehensive and dispirited, he arrived in Kassel on August 25, 1925—and almost at once things got better. After living the first two weeks in a lonely rented room near the theater, he was soon taken in hand by a remarkable woman named Emy Rubensohn. A spy little person in her mid-forties with darting eyes, quick nervous movements, and apparently unlimited energy, she was married to the wealthy owner of a textile factory, Ernst Rubensohn, and lived in an elegant home in the finest part of the town. She was a generous supporter of the arts and particularly of music, about which she had a good layman’s knowledge. Having met Krenek at the theater,

she invited him to occupy an extra room in her home, and there he lived for the next year and a half. The Rubensohns became lifelong friends and supporters of Krenek's music, especially in the years following the Second World War when they were living in New York, where Krenek often stayed with them. In Kassel it was like the good times with the Demuth family in Berlin, and Krenek began to get out among people interested in the arts. He was not happy, but he was no longer so dreadfully alone.¹⁵

Even though this was the high time of experimentalism in the performing arts in Germany and Bekker was a proven friend of contemporary music, the list of plays and operas for the winter season was unadventurous. In the past there had been occasional productions of operas by Schreker and Richard Strauss and ballets by Alfredo Casella, but the Kassel audience was unenthusiastic about modernism and only reluctantly attended performances of recent works when they were part of a subscription series. On the playbill for 1925–1927 were Max Reimann's *Willis Frau* (Willi's wife), described as a "family piece"; Dietzenschmidt's (Anton Schmidt's) *Vom lieben Augustin* (About dear Augustine); Schiller's *The Maid of Orleans*; Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*; Ernst Toller's newest work, *Die Rache des verhöhten Liebhabers* (The revenge of the scorned lover); plays by Calderón, Pirandello, and Shakespeare; Goethe's *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit* (The triumph of feeling); and *Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre* (Marlborough goes to war), a puppet play by Marcel Achard, a young contemporary Frenchman. Among the operas and operettas presented were *Der Dorfbarbier* (The village barber), an early-nineteenth-century comic opera by Johann Schenk; Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*; *Die Puppe* (The puppet), a very popular late-nineteenth-century operetta by Eduard Audran; *Der arme Heinrich* (Poor Heinrich), by the determinedly antimodernist Hans Pfitzner; and short operas by Gluck, Cimarosa, Offenbach, and Auber—scarcely what one would expect from a leading advocate of contemporary music whose assistant had written the avant-garde symphony that had created such an uproar in Kassel less than three years earlier.

Krenek's duties were not specified; he was simply expected to be around and help out. To this end he composed background music for *Vom lieben Augustin*, Achard's puppet fantasy, and the plays of Toller and Goethe. For *Augustin* he used a trio consisting of accordion, guitar, and clarinet and parodied the coarse street music played by such an ensemble; and for *Triumph* he wrote a satirical score that included a parody of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." Yet even as he performed these services he had misgivings, for he saw background music as potentially divisive. Though intended to intensify expression and give atmosphere, it was, he thought, not needed and no more than ornamentation. Words alone should suffice if an actor has a voice and a personality that fills the stage. If background music is to be used, it should not draw attention to itself but serve merely as an extension of the actor's delivery. In this regard it differed from the music of opera, where the singing voice incorporates the words and music as one.¹⁶

He also conducted the orchestra for small Sunday morning concerts at the theater, which featured composers such as Pergolesi and Cimarosa. He had not wanted to learn conducting, but the skill he thus acquired would prove to be a major asset throughout his life. Finally, he prepared some music for broadcast over the Kassel radio station and sometimes served as an accompanist, especially for broadcasts of his own songs.

Even more significant than learning to conduct was the experience he got writing notes for the theater's program booklets. In eighteen months he wrote twenty-five little essays ranging from three hundred to one thousand words. Seven dealt directly with the works being presented, all operas except for *Triumph*. When *Der Dorfbarbier* was staged, for example, Krenek obliged with notes on Schenk's life and style; for Gluck's *Armide* he provided a lengthy account of Gluck's life and his controversy with an Italian rival, Niccolò Piccinni. Another seven dealt with miscellaneous topics such as the hundredth anniversary of Beethoven's death, the popularity of sports in comparison with the arts, and the lack of a common culture to give support to taste. In writing about sports he showed a bit of his whimsical side (sports are more popular because people are sure about the standards for judging them and the outcome can be measured: either one's side won or it didn't), thereby anticipating his superbly humorous pieces of later years. In writing about taste he deplored the fragmentation of society and shared traditions—a topic of much concern in essays to come.

The remaining eleven pieces concerned the nature of drama and of opera. The heart of these were three linked essays, "Der Operntext" (The libretto), "Der Opernstoff" (The subject matter of opera), and "Die Opernkomposition" (Composing operas). These are especially interesting because they appeared in the spring of 1927, less than a year after *Jonny's* completion and during the time when the opera was enjoying its astonishing early success. Krenek had also written two one-act operas since *Jonny*—*Der Diktator*, completed the previous summer, and *Das geheime Königreich* (The secret kingdom), completed in February—and was at the moment working on a one-act comic opera, *Schwergewicht* (Heavyweight), with which he hoped to capitalize on *Jonny's* success. These essays show the conceptions that directed his creative efforts now and in the months ahead, when he composed the deliberately "grand" opera *Leben des Orest* (Life of Orestes).¹⁷

His most fundamental idea, which he would maintain throughout his career, was that opera is a *form of drama*. It is not, he wrote in "Die Opernkomposition," a theater piece with music or a symphony with costumed singers but a unique entity, "a chemical union of . . . elements that cannot be understood apart from one another." Musical form should not interfere with dramatic necessity, for the main purpose of the music is not to display the art of the singer but to intensify the dramatic events. It would seem at first glance that he was simply repeating the ideas about opera developed by Richard Wagner, with which he was acquainted from

conversations with Bekker and from his close reading a few years earlier of Bekker's book, with its careful analysis of Wagner's theories regarding the union of music and drama. But although both men opposed the tendency to emphasize the music at the expense of the drama, there were significant differences in their ways of thinking. Krenek was not looking back to Wagner but rather setting forth conclusions he had reached from watching performances at the Kassel theater and being exposed day after day to all the resources and expressive aspects of drama, whether as a play or as an opera. And in speaking of a "chemical union" he was not aiming at Wagner's collective creation in which drama, music, painting, and sculpture melded to form a new, transcendent medium or superart. Instead he wanted to accentuate the drama *as* drama, but with the elements so closely integrated that they would have no meaning if taken alone or valued above all else, as, of course, the music of opera commonly was by audiences and directors alike.

Because opera is such a complex medium, Krenek maintained, the libretto must incorporate clear, logical, coherent action, which should not be relegated to intervals between great lyrical moments. Words, characters, and plots must be simple and easily followed. Psychological explanations of the kind found in Expressionist plays should not be necessary. Almost as an afterthought, Krenek added in "Der Opernstoff" that an opera should not have an ethical aim, "because music has at its disposal no means for the expression of ethical judgment." The sentimentality of operettas might be deplorable, but they succeed in part because they remain faithful to the basic principles of drama and are understandable.

Having made his point about the necessity of logic, Krenek displayed his sense of theater (and his fondness for paradox) by observing that success in drama depends more on intensity than on logical coherence, especially if the intensity is cumulative—which helped to explain the success of operas that were illogical or downright unintelligible and of revues that demonstrated no coherence whatsoever. Indeed, while the finest play or opera *is* logical and offers a significant representation of the human spirit, these qualities become apparent only in retrospect. At the moment of performance it is the vigor and vividness of the individual happenings, whether linked or not, to which the audience responds. And these events, in fact all things in drama, are brought to life by the actors, especially by their voices.

One might argue over the preeminence Krenek assigned to the voice, but he offered a persuasive argument when he maintained that everything in opera depends on singing *actors*. This in turn led him to conclude that the score is a secondary matter, like the scenery and the costumes! However, composers enjoy an advantage over playwrights in the degree of control they have over the pitch, timing, dynamics, and cadencing with which the actors convey the words and achieve the effects desired by the work's creator. In a play the director must impose the interpretive control that the composer has all along.

Krenek obviously wanted the composer's control over the voice to be used on

behalf of the drama and not simply to achieve beautiful musical effects. He took the meaning of the whole, integrated work with utmost seriousness, for he believed that although it was obliged to use simple, universal character types, an operatic work could represent human experience with a unique comprehensiveness, immediacy, and penetration, and he regretted the tendency of music dramatists to ignore the contemporary world and look for subjects among imaginary settings remote in time and space. When he himself came to write libretti placed in ancient Greece or Renaissance Spain, their events had close parallels in the present. Far removed in time, his texts were as contemporary as the day's newspaper, and much more instructive.

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As Krenek worked in partial obscurity in Kassel, eruptions of creative energy were occurring elsewhere. Mann's *The Magic Mountain* was published in 1924, and in that year Ford Madox Ford founded the *Transatlantic Review* and printed fragments of Joyce's "Work in Progress" (later *Finnegans Wake*). In 1925 Gropius designed the Bauhaus buildings to be erected in Dessau, Brancusi created "Bird in Space," Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* and Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* were released, and intellectuals pondered the time-space manifold described in Alfred North Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*. In 1926 Henry Moore completed "Draped Figure Reclining," the first work in the style for which he became famous. In 1927 Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic, Heisenberg announced the Principle of Indeterminacy, and Al Jolson's *The Jazz Singer*, the first commercial sound movie, was released.

Big things were also happening in music. Schönberg's *Erwartung* had its premiere in Prague in 1924. The next year Berg's *Wozzeck* was premiered in Berlin. In 1926 in Dresden, Hindemith's *Cardillac* and Weill's *Der Protagonist* had their first performances. Krenek, too, had his innings: 1924 saw the premieres of *Zwingburg*, in Berlin, and *Sprung*, in Frankfurt. Two years later Bekker staged the premiere of *Orpheus und Eurydike* in Kassel. But because of his diffidence and his tendency to depend on the initiative of more aggressive spirits such as Schünemann and Bekker, Krenek's place in all this excitement was, at best, ambiguous. The measure of his role in the big scene is suggested by the fact that when the ISCM festival for 1926 took place in Zürich, where he had so recently lived, no work of his was performed.

But even as he brooded about the nature of opera and composed his little fragments of incidental music for the plays Bekker was staging, he was sketching a work that would change everything. Soon there would not be an opera director or opera lover in Germany who did not know his name, and he would not need to lift a finger to advance his fortunes. He would be at the very center of the big scene.

4 • KRENEK'S EARLY OPERAS

When Krenek and his friend Fritz Demuth sat pondering the ideas for what would become *Zwingburg*, they probably hoped that it would achieve some kind of spectacular success, but they certainly did not intend their work to be “useful, entertaining, practical” in the sense that Krenek had in mind when he wrote to Bekker after his visit to Paris. They were absolutists disinclined to accede to popular tastes: Krenek as the aggressive atonalist, Demuth as an Expressionist would-be playwright much influenced by the works of Ernst Toller.

Toller was a popular subject of discussion among German intellectuals at the time because of his imprisonment for high treason, a charge that derived from his having served briefly in 1919 as president of the short-lived Bavarian Republic and subsequently as an officer of the Communist forces in the civil war that put an end to the republic. In 1919, while imprisoned at Niederschönefeld, he had written *Masse Mensch* (Masses and men), a play about a strike, the destruction of enslaving machines, the weakness of the workers, and the need for nonviolent revolution—the only kind of uprising, he now believed, with any hope of success. His loosely rhyming, irregular dramatic verse provided a pattern for Demuth’s lines in *Zwingburg*. *Masse Mensch* was followed in 1922 by *Die Maschinenstürmer* (The machine wreckers), which emphasized, as would *Zwingburg*, the ease with which man-in-the-mass could be swayed, and called for a vision that would give direction to the struggle of working people to free themselves from the deadening routine and squalor of factories.

Looking back from a distance of many years, Krenek speculated that Demuth might also have been influenced by Walter Hasenclever’s dramatic poem *Der Retter* (The redeemer, 1915), in which a poet, acting as a prophet of peace and brother-

hood, is destroyed by the military.¹ Significantly, the social protest and radicalism in Demuth's libretto came not from the personal experiences of the young collaborators during the general strike in Berlin but rather from the theater and literature. Both Krenek and Demuth felt ties with the revolutionaries depicted in novels, poems, and plays but, as *Zwingburg* and *Sprung* clearly show, were scornful of actual loutish and ill-smelling workers. They were amateurs of revolution, not ideologues or activists.

Only Franz Werfel's version of the libretto for *Zwingburg* survives. When Krenek first met him at Breitenstein late in the summer of 1922 and showed him Demuth's version, Werfel liked its politics but thought the verse rough. He undertook to improve the language, and while thus engaged he changed the ending, making it more hopeful by suggesting that salvation lay somewhere in the future. Although otherwise he made no alterations,² it has been widely assumed that Werfel was solely responsible for the libretto. Julius Kapp, for example, reported in the program notes for the premiere performance in Berlin that the libretto was prepared by Werfel from a sketch by the composer. Through the years other commentators, too, have failed to mention Demuth's part, perhaps because when Universal Edition published a piano-vocal reduction, to which they may have referred, his name was omitted, while Werfel's was prominent.³ But Werfel merely touched up the wording, adding a certain lushness that made Krenek uneasy. Later, under the influence of Karl Kraus, who detested what he regarded as Werfel's sentimental excesses, Krenek came actively to dislike not only Werfel's revision of Demuth's text but the bulk of his writing as well.

Demuth posed two questions: What is freedom? And can mankind endure it? His answer to the first comes to us indirectly. Obviously, freedom is not enslavement by military or industrial institutions, but neither is it license to pursue one's personal objectives with egocentric obsessiveness. His answer to the second question is unambiguous: presently humankind cannot cope with total freedom because, having no experience with it, we rush to extremes and then, bewildered and fearful, retreat to the certainties of bondage.

The opera opens in predawn darkness. In a colossal fortress-factory men and women labor for an unseen tyrant to the monotonous rhythms of a hand organ. Although the organ-grinder loves humanity, he cannot cease turning his crank. When morning dawns, the tyrant releases the workers for the day. The organ-grinder is tied to a stake, and the others are free to follow their hearts' desires: the consumptive pursues health; a swinish drunkard gorges himself; a man and woman express their love without fear. The organ-grinder warns the workers not to release him, saying, "As long as I suffer you can live."

But the workers, delirious with freedom, march against the factory and do release the organ-grinder, who immediately starts to turn his crank as twilight descends. Mesmerized by the music, the people willingly resume their slavery. The organ-

grinder then addresses the audience, saying that although he did not have enough love to save the people, somewhere in the future a savior will appear.

The action of *Zwingburg* is episodic and revolves on the figure of the organ-grinder with neat symmetry, as Wolfgang Rogge showed in a perceptive analysis of the opera:

- Prologue of the Organ-Grinder (Dawn)
- Demonstration of the Power of Zwingburg
- Chaining of the Organ-Grinder
- Freedom of the Workers
- Organ-Grinder's warning (Center)
- Raising an Idol of Love, Beauty, and Humanity
- Releasing the Organ-Grinder
- Reestablishment of the Power of Zwingburg
- Epilogue of the Organ-Grinder (Twilight)⁴

The organ-grinder is a stereotype of Expressionist poetry and drama: the lonely visionary, opposed to militarism and capitalism, who suffers with and for the masses who, in their ignorance, humiliate and reject him. The fortress-factory, filled with machinery that the workers would demolish, is but one of many such Expressionist symbols (though it brings to mind Kafka's castle, Demuth could not have known it because Kafka's novel was not published until 1926). Strands of Expressionist father hatred, self-pity, and self-contempt are woven into the paradox of the tyrant using the artist, the would-be friend of the people, to manipulate and enslave them. But just as Expressionist is the pervasive contempt for the people, who are shown destroying the statue that symbolizes love, beauty, and humanity in their anger over losing their largely misspent freedom. Despite the suggestion at the end, of a classless society to come, the main body of the work is, as Rogge pointed out, thoroughly bourgeois in sympathies and point of view.

Although *Zwingburg* has always been considered an opera, Krenek, in keeping with his ideas at the time, called it a "scenic cantata." His view then was entirely opposite to that developed in his theater notes for Kassel, for he insisted, on the basis of Kurth's booklet and his conversations with Erdmann, on the linearity and absolute autonomy of music. He was persuaded that music should move by its own necessities in a living stream of energy, without regard for any other considerations such as those of drama. He chose the term "cantata" because the material seemed to him more epic than operatic, and its themes and carefully balanced episodes lent themselves to an oratorio style.⁵

Although Rogge has argued that the principle of linearity is at work in Krenek's treatment of chords and management of the voices, in fact Krenek was going against his principles of the time and putting into practice ideas that only later became tenets, for his handling of consonance and dissonance, of rhythms and sonorities,

conforms carefully with the progress of events in the drama. With the organ-grinder's opening words, "Wehe, wehe, weh' über euch!" (Alas, alas, alas for you!), is sounded a motif of lament that ties the work together musically and dramatically. Similarly, the organ-grinder's music signifies enslavement, with the power of the invisible tyrant repeatedly suggested by an ominous motif that Wagner might have admired. The workers sing in a choral-concert manner as they briefly celebrate a vision of love, beauty, and brotherhood, but they shift to shoutlike unison lines as they march against the fortress-factory. The spreading light of the dawn is accompanied first by flutes and violas and then by bass viols and trombones. In short, Krenek was trying for scenic and dramatic effects, but not always successfully, for his unusual aptitude for contrapuntal polyphony sometimes took over.

The critic H. H. Stuckenschmidt maintained that in spite of Krenek's use of a large orchestra and chorus, much of the work was typical of chamber music. "Almost everywhere the material is found to be canonical or fugal." This, he believed, set up conflicts between the music and the text: empty spots, places where the music was not up to the energy level of the action, musical opportunities that went undeveloped. But one place where all things came together was the scene where two lovers rejoice in their freedom. Instead of using the orchestra contrapuntally, Krenek subdued it, letting it accompany the singers in a duet of great melodic beauty and harmonic clarity. But this scene, Stuckenschmidt thought, was an exception, because as a rule Krenek used motifs not so much for characterization and enhancement of the action as for formal construction. Although Stuckenschmidt presses his point too far, its overall cogency shows how Krenek wobbled in his composing between music for the sake of the drama and music for its own sake.⁶

Surprisingly, Krenek is least absolutist just where one would expect him to be most determinedly so: in his handling of tonality, which is almost wholly at the service of the drama. When the workers sing a paean to freedom, their voices are grouped in simple, hymnlike triad harmony. A perfect cadence (IV-V-I) signifies the escape into the eternal freedom of death by the artisan who fashioned the statue that the workers smash. Clashing timbres and the iteration of augmented open fourths, fifths, sixths, and eighths infer the inhuman power of the tyrant, the misery of factory work, and the menace lurking within each moment of the people's false freedom. At the conclusion, Krenek suggests his dubiety over the hopes for the future by letting the work end on a diminished fifth that gradually sinks into silence. Despite his resolution with regard to composing operas, Krenek treated tonality operatically—and effectively. As theater, *Zwingsburg* works.

Even before the score was half complete, Erdmann, with whom Krenek and Anna had just made their first visit, began efforts to have *Zwingsburg* produced. Krenek wrote to his parents on August 3, 1922, saying that as a result of Erdmann's prompting the director of the Hannover Opera was interested in it; then, just before returning to Berlin for the fall term at the academy, he traveled to Hannover and

played the piano-vocal version for the director and orchestra conductor, who liked it but could not fix a date. Alexander Zemlinsky, principal conductor of the German Opera in Prague as well as Schönberg's brother-in-law, thought of staging it together with Schönberg's *Erwartung* (composed in 1909 but still unproduced); this would have pleased Krenek greatly, but Zemlinsky could not fix a date either. Eventually, with Bekker's help, a contract was signed with Ernst Sert for a production at Frankfurt to open around the end of February 1924, but before that date Sert quarreled with the other officers of the Frankfurt Opera and left for La Scala. Otto Klemperer expressed an interest in presenting it at the Volksoper in Berlin or, after he changed jobs, at the opera house in Wiesbaden. Finally Erich Kleiber took it up, and after some initial difficulties *Zwillingburg* was given its premiere on October 21, 1924, at the Berlin State Opera. (Even though it was Krenek's first opera, it was not the first to be performed, for *Sprung* had been staged in Frankfurt the previous June.) A few days later, Krenek wrote to his parents that the president of the republic had attended the opening, which Krenek called brilliant and beautiful. Among the many letters and telegrams of congratulation that Krenek received was one from Alban Berg, who had seen the score in Vienna and admired it, especially its orchestration.⁷ But despite the favorable reviews, the public was indifferent, and attendance was poor;⁸ the opera was dropped from the repertoire before the season had ended. It was revived at Essen in 1929, but by then the libretto seemed tediously dated, and after that the work disappeared for over three decades.

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Der Sprung über den Schatten, Krenek's second opera, differed from *Zwillingburg* in every respect: musically, dramatically, and emotionally. Krenek called it a comic opera, but H. H. Stuckenschmidt and other critics quickly pointed out that in spirit, if not quite in form (all but a minute portion of the dialogue is sung), it is more nearly an operetta. In creating *Zwillingburg*, Krenek and Demuth had aimed at something of solemnity and magnitude—a "big" work in the sense that the Second Symphony was one. But with *Sprung*, Krenek simply wanted to entertain the audience and make money. The biggest difference, however, was that Krenek wrote his own libretto, something he would do henceforth for all but four of the twenty music dramas yet to come.⁹

Before beginning work on the text he wrote to Ernst Toller, who was still in prison, asking if he might use a recently published comedy of his. Toller did not outright say no, but he was cool to the idea.¹⁰ So, undeterred by the fact that he was in the midst of finishing his Third Symphony, Krenek began sketching his own text and soon produced a libretto that was studiously and satirically anti-Expressionist in its depiction of a poet, a revolutionary, and the bovine common people. Plainly he was appealing to the prejudices of his intended audience, but he was also giving voice to his patrician distastes. For while he never failed to insist on his revolutionary

sympathies, he was motivated not by concern for the downtrodden but by disgust with the mediocrity of established institutions. He never came nearer in any work to solicitude for the lower orders than in *Zwingburg*—where, of course, the words were not his.

To entertain he created a farrago of operetta stereotypes and clichés, currently fashionable fads, topical satire, and bedroom farce. Princess Leonore, married to the boorish Kuno, loves an impoverished poet named Goldhaar, who, unaware of her feelings, also pines hopelessly for her. Dr. Berg, a charlatan who dabbles in hypnotism and spiritualism, wants her too, and to be near her he takes the place of a private detective whom Kuno has hired to spy on her. While Kuno chases a saucy chambermaid, Leonore and Goldhaar meet at a masked ball at which the dancers are trying to leap over their own shadows—that is, to overcome their inhibitions.

In a chorus sung by the dancers to a catchy syncopated (but not truly jazz) rhythm and a mildly “blues” effect produced by lowering the third of the diatonic scale (from E to E-flat in the C-major scale), Krenek played on the currently fashionable enthusiasm for supposedly uninhibited, hedonistic blacks, especially black entertainers from the United States, and the notion, then widespread in Europe, that jazz could drive one mad:

Oh lalala, oh lala!
Heisser Rhythmus zucke wieder;
Jazzband spiele tolle Lieder auf! . . .

Im freien Land Amerika
lebt' einst ein schwarzer Nigger-boy
der tanzte . . .

bis ihm mit der Zeit
Gehirn und Herz verkrampft.

Oh lalala, oh lala!
Hot rhythm, shake again;
jazzband, play mad songs! . . .

In the free land of America
once lived a black nigger-boy
who danced . . .

until with time
his mind and spirit became rigid.

And as he danced he sang:

Rund im Kreise
drehen, stampfen, wilder Tanz!
O lass mich in dir untergehn,
ich bleibe nie mehr im Leben stehn. . . .
Drehet euch im wilden Wirbeltanz,
ihr werdet leicht und frei sein.

Round in a circle,
twirl, stamp, wild dance!
Oh, let me be lost in you,
I am no longer trapped in life. . . .
Turn in a wild, whirling dance,
you will be light and free.

The chorus describes how the boy met “the beautiful Maximie,” a femme fatale who dances the men who desire her into exhaustion. He manages to leap over his shadow, and they go dancing off forever. In passing, the chorus refers to the boy’s dance as a fox-trot, and this portion of the score is labeled “Foxtrot,” which suggests how fascinated Europeans were by “crazy” animal dances—the turkey trot, the bunny hug, the grizzly bear—originating in America. (Determined to have a popular success, Krenek composed a fox-trot, since lost, in the style of the opera and played it on the Frankfurt radio station to arouse interest in the premiere.)

Made reckless by all this terpsichorean frenzy, Leonore tells Goldhaar to leap over his shadow and be free too, promising that they will meet again. After indescribable complications involving mistaken identities, overheard conversations, and the false imprisonment of Goldhaar, a revolution breaks out, Kuno is overthrown, the lovers elope, and by popular acclaim the mountebank Dr. Berg is elected president of the newly established republic.

Most of the libretto is in verse that, though irregular, is skillfully matched with the music. Taken alone, many of the lines sink to the level of doggerel, and were it not for their satirical intent, some parts of the dialogue, especially the passages between the lovers, would be intolerably banal. What saves the libretto—and the work as a whole—is the grotesquerie, which resembles that of the Brecht-Weill anti-opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (Rise and fall of the City of Mahagonny) in mocking the sentimentality and self-pity of Expressionism, and the buoyancy of the music, which, as in the “nigger-boy” chorus, sweeps one along too swiftly to allow carping at the absurd words. As Wolfgang Rogge has pointed out, Krenek was also making fun of the modish preoccupation with hypnotism and the occult that had led to such films as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Nosferatu*.¹¹ All this was picked up by the stage designer of the Frankfurt production, which had sets that caricatured the visual clichés of Expressionism.

The music of *Sprung* entertains by mixing mildly provocative dissonance with ingratiating tonality. Such atonality as does arise serves to emphasize the ridiculing of Dr. Berg and his followers, while the jazz rhythms and instrumentation (banjo, xylophone) help to make fun of the dancers’ behavior at the masked ball and the absurdity of the courtroom scene in which Goldhaar, who has been confused with Dr. Berg, is tried for allegedly using spiritualism to seduce the princess. Though not the first European composer of art music to use jazz elements (Stravinsky wrote his *Piano Rag Music* in 1919, the same year that Milhaud used touches of jazz in *Le*

boeuf sur le toit), Krenek was the first to use them in an opera. (But it is his *Jonny*, not *Sprung*, that is commonly referred to as the first “jazz opera,” a misnomer for both of them.)

His rhythms in *Sprung* have the sprightly jerkiness of the popular tunes to which the new steps from America were danced, but his harmonic structures are far in advance of the most sophisticated devices of tunesmiths such as Gershwin. In truth, it can be said that he suggested, even parodied, but did not actually employ jazz. Even in a work as unpretentious as this, he was simply too inventive to be so confined, and this is especially obvious in the often elaborately contrapuntal texture. The ludicrous trial of Goldhaar is set to a fugue, and the episodic structure of the libretto freed Krenek to compose duets, quartets, and ensembles impressive in their ingenuity and difficult to sing. And while these episodes usually ended with a reassuring dominant-tonic cadence, they included many puzzling suspensions and unexpected enharmonic shifts. In attempting to leap over his own shadow, Krenek was simply too witty and exuberantly clever to write down to his audience.

Sprung was first performed at the Frankfurt Opera House on June 9, 1924, with Ludwig Rottenberg conducting. It was assured of a good audience and press coverage—important for Krenek’s first opera performance—for it was scheduled for the first day of the annual festival of the music society that premiered Krenek’s First String Quartet in 1921 and Second Symphony in 1923 (though it was not part of the festival program). Earlier, Krenek’s old classmate at the academy, Josef Rosenstock, now the conductor at the Darmstadt Theater, had considered doing *Sprung*, but on seeing the score he and his associates objected to the libretto and urged Krenek to call in a collaborator. By this time, Krenek had established relations with Frankfurt through the negotiations over *Zwingburg*, and Rottenberg, who had a good feeling for the music and was sufficiently wealthy and well connected among the local gentry to take risks, decided it would make an amusing piece for New Year’s Eve 1923. The postponement until the following June probably helped Krenek’s career by bringing in a more knowledgeable audience, which included Scherchen and Richard Strauss, at that time officers in the music society.

The production was good, the audience liked the opera, but the critics, Krenek reported to his parents, were perplexed and divided. They strongly praised the staging and Rottenberg’s conducting, but they were nearly unanimous in condemning the libretto. While conceding the timeliness of the satire on society’s preoccupation with spiritualism and the madness of fox-trots, and granting that it was daring to introduce telephones and auto horns into the staid realm of opera (several were agreeably surprised that the supposedly joyless Krenek of the first quartets and the Second Symphony would attempt a comic opera), most of them considered the libretto stereotyped, incoherent, overly long, and—cruellest of all—out of date. Writing in *Anbruch*, Paul Bekker, who praised the organization of the music, was one of the few who liked the libretto. But Karl Holl, his replacement on the *Frank-*

furter Zeitung, wrote that despite some brilliant musical passages, the work lacked sufficient dramatic flow to sustain interest for two hours. Stuckenschmidt was reminded of the sentimental early-nineteenth-century comic operas of (Gustav) Albert Lortzing, which were very popular with unsophisticated audiences, and admitted that one might be entertained by such a dreadful type of work if one did not feel ashamed for a genius.

Almost all reviewers paid their respects to Krenek's talent. They were amused by the musical jokes, such as allusions to *Don Giovanni*, *Fidelio*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*, and pleasantly astonished by Krenek's adroitness in combining blues harmonies and jazz rhythms with rondos, passacaglias, and fugues, though Oscar von Pander of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* thought such forms ill fitted for drama. "Nevertheless," he concluded, "there remains a great deal that is interesting, because Krenek is without doubt one of the most original creative artists, and much can be expected from this twenty-four-year-old." (Krenek was twenty-two when he wrote the opera.)

Although the directors of the Hamburg and Leipzig opera houses expressed some interest, *Sprung* was not performed again until the spring of 1928, when it was produced in Leningrad, the first contemporary Western opera to be staged in the Soviet Union. The bureaucrat who gave permission for its performance probably missed altogether the implications of a people's revolt that placed an improvident rascal at the head of the state. Thereafter *Sprung* vanished until the spring of 1989, when it was revived at Bielefeld by John Dew and made an instant hit with critics and audiences, who were disinclined to judge this curiosity harshly. (One reviewer even reported with astonishment that the composer was actually still alive and living somewhere in the United States!) When he saw the Frankfurt premiere, Krenek, who thought that *Sprung* had many faults, was heartened by all that he learned from watching the production. Faults or no, this frolicsome work deserved better than to languish in darkness for six decades; indeed, it is surprising that it was not staged during the excitement that followed the triumph of *Jonny*, on which Krenek began work six months after *Sprung*'s premiere. But between the composing of *Sprung* in 1923 and that of *Jonny* in 1926, he was to essay his first grand opera.

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In late November 1922 Krenek wrote to his parents that he had heard Oskar Kokoschka was looking for someone to compose incidental music for his play *Orpheus und Eurydike*, which was being considered for production in New York. Hindemith had used Kokoschka's *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* as the libretto of his first opera, which had been favorably received when it opened in Stuttgart the previous June. Krenek decided to go to Dresden and consult with the notorious playwright-painter, and once more Kestenberg came to his aid and put in a word on his behalf with Kokoschka. They met on December 5 at Kokoschka's home. The writer was

distracted and vague about details, but they agreed that Krenek should compose not incidental music but an opera.

Born in 1886 in Pöchlarn on the Danube in Lower Austria, Kokoschka had grown up in Vienna, where he attended the School of Arts and Crafts, intending to become an art teacher. Before he could complete his training, however, he was deprived of his scholarship at the urging of the Ministry of Culture and Instruction, owing to the scandals created by a semiprivate performance of *Mörder* and the violence and explicit sexuality of his drawings and posters. It mattered little, for Kokoschka soon made a name for himself with portraits wherein he sought to depict not a physical likeness but the vital character and spiritual presence of the sitter. To this end he manipulated shapes, proportions, and perspectives and used colors much as a composer would use timbres to suggest moods and attitudes associated with alienation, anxiety, sexual torment, and primitive, even savage, passions. In 1911 he became the lover of Mahler's widow, Alma, who was the subject of many of his works (among them the intense and tumultuous double portrait *The Tempest*, painted in 1914 and now in the Basel Kunstmuseum, which many regard as the quintessential Expressionist painting). Their affair ended with the outbreak of war, shortly before Kokoschka enlisted in the Austrian cavalry. Severely wounded on the Russian front in 1915, he spent his convalescence in a Viennese hospital writing *Orpheus und Eurydike*, which, he always insisted later, was based on the hallucinations that tormented him during the first weeks of his recovery.¹²

Contorting the legend of Orpheus for his own uses, he described the progress into madness and death of lovers consumed by jealousy. He inserted the Greek phrase ἄλως ἄλλως (*alos makhar*: "happiness is otherwise") at several points. A play on the names Alma and Oskar, the phrase also served as the title of an extravagantly Expressionist poem that he composed while painting *The Tempest*. Published in 1919, *Orpheus und Eurydike* had its first performance in Frankfurt on February 21, 1921, before an audience that was bewildered by its language and many private allusions but impressed by its vehemence.

Krenek, too, was bewildered. Seeing that the play was too long and complicated to be used without cuts, he thought he might make it more intelligible by judicious excisions. In January 1923 he paid a second visit to Kokoschka to discuss these changes, but although the painter was charming and polite, he had obviously lost interest in the project; he told Krenek to make whatever cuts he wished.¹³ Thus, while he was working on the score of *Sprung*, negotiating to have *Zwingburg* performed, composing his First Piano Concerto and his Third Symphony, making sketches for his Third String Quartet, and arranging for his parents to attend the premiere of his Second Symphony, Krenek went over the play, cutting line after line, but never whole scenes, until he had reduced the text by at least a third. By June, when he and Anna went to stay with the Erdmanns at Langballigau, he was well along with composing the music for the opera. He went over the text with

Erdmann, hoping that they could make better sense of it, but in the end he simply gave up and went on with his composing. Somehow, he thought, the words and music together would communicate an effect that could not be accounted for in ordinary terms. By the end of July he had finished the opera. He was not yet twenty-three years old.

Krenek had pared many redundant lines but left the action essentially unchanged. Three Furies come to the home of Orpheus and Eurydike* with a message from Hades, the lord of the Underworld: Eurydike must die and spend seven years with him. The Furies trick Psyche, the lovers' guard, and carry off Eurydike, who has died of a snakebite. When the seven years have passed, Psyche leads Orpheus into the Underworld, where he finds and rescues Eurydike, who is restored to life. They board a ship and set off for their homeland. At sea the crew pulls in a net in which is entangled a skull. Orpheus finds clenched in its jaws a ring inscribed "Alos makhar," which he had given to Eurydike. Frantic with jealousy, he questions her as a great storm lashes the ship. Eurydike tells how Hades tried to seduce her and how, after seven years of resistance, she forgot Orpheus and unveiled herself for Hades. At that Orpheus goes mad and kills her.

Several years later, the deranged Orpheus is digging among the ruins of their home when he comes upon his broken lyre. A mob appears and hangs him. But he does not die at once. Eurydike's ghost enters and begs for release from the torment of his passion, whereupon Orpheus exults in the fact that his love is really hatred and, at last, dies. In an afterpiece, Psyche and a chorus of youths and maidens sing of love, hope, and the renewal of life, signifying the final triumph of the brotherhood of man over selfish egocentricity.

Hans Hartleb, who directed an intelligent, skillfully staged revival of the opera in Graz during the 1973–1974 season, captured the character of the erratic, overburdened text in the program notes:

Kokoschka's drama is a drama of doubt: doubt about the possibility of the realization of love, doubt about the power of faithfulness to the other and to one's self, doubt about the likelihood of human society. It is—in the spirit of Strindberg [or even better, Weininger]—the drama of eternal alienation between Man and Woman. Above all, it is the drama of that unrest which compels the human being to seek relief in adventure, which makes him fear the end of happiness even in the first moment of fulfillment.

This same drama is depicted in Kokoschka's painting *The Tempest*, which shows the lovers adrift in a frail little boat battered by great winds and waves. The Woman sleeps in calm contentment, untroubled by the turmoil and danger—as Eurydike had been until goaded by Orpheus to recount the past, which she only wanted to

*Because the sound of the names is important when *Orpheus und Eurydike* and the later *Pallas Athene weint* are sung, the German spelling of these names has been retained in discussions of these operas.

forget. The Man lies clenched in anxiety and despair, staring obsessively at some vision beyond the storm—as Orpheus had stared when he envisioned Eurydike naked before Hades. The drama and the painting epitomize Expressionism in their autobiographical-confessional modes; their antinaturalism; their images of the artist as outcast and victim; their focus on self-tormenting doubts, fears, and passions brought to the point of psychoses; their emphasis on darkness, defeat, and death—ending, like *Zwillingburg*, Werfel's poems, and many another Expressionist work, with a vision, one against all reason, of a new world of universal love and beauty.

Like the painting, *Orpheus und Eurydike* really has only two characters. Hades never appears; Amor, Psyche's beloved, is glimpsed but does not speak; Psyche herself is but a foil to emphasize the carnality of Eurydike and the self-destructive violence of Orpheus. The Furies, the sailors, the peasants who hang Orpheus, serve to advance the action but can best be understood as embodiments of the ravaging passions of the principals. Even in the original, Kokoschka made nothing of Hades, who simply furnished the occasion for a murderous conflict between the Artist and the Eternal Woman that went far deeper than—indeed, had little to do with—anything so commonplace as a “triangle.” But it was not his reshaping of the legend that made the text so puzzling, so much as the elements Kokoschka added (from his hallucinations, if we can believe his account), such as a troop of soldiers who appear and fight with the peasants just before the latter hang Orpheus (they are not trying to save him), a “fishwife” (woman? fish? monster?) seen in the depths by a terrified Fool who has no other part in the action, the skull with the inscribed ring (whose remains are these?), an unborn child that Eurydike carries at the time of her rescue (it does not seem to be Hades'), a snake belonging to Psyche, and so forth.

Adding to the difficulties is the way the language leaps from one level to another, mixing coarse dialect with archly literary phrases, and uses familiar words in ways that suggest but give no clues to private connotations and associations. Pressed by Krenek during their preliminary talks to explain such obscurities, Kokoschka deliberately evaded clarification, using his considerable charm to deflect the conversation from the text altogether. At the time of the Graz production, Krenek admitted that there was much in even the reduced text that he had never understood and never would. Given the autobiographical aspect of Kokoschka's treatment, a psychoanalyst might discover some meaningful pattern among the elements, but they do not coalesce into a dramatic whole.

In the end, Kokoschka's play was a failure, of interest today and perhaps in its own time only because he wrote it and used materials from his extravagant personal history. Krenek's opera, in contrast, succeeds on the strength of its magnificent music, even though one cannot figure out what some of the vivid details signify or why at certain points the characters behave as they do. In short, what he had hoped for when he pushed on despite his and Erdmann's puzzlement had come to pass.

This was, by a considerable margin, Krenek's finest composition to date. The

Second Symphony awes one with its seemingly immeasurable power, its jagged grandeur. The music of *Orpheus und Eurydike*, however, surpasses it in depth and scope, in the range of inventions, in the masterful integration of the multitudinous and complex elements. Yet because it is compromised by the tangled text, the overall effect, in terms of peaks of eloquence, is somewhat less than that of the symphony. Anticipating the position he would enunciate in his essays on musical drama, Krenek reversed the priorities he had followed when composing the score of *Zwingburg*; as he wrote in his notes for the November 27, 1926, premiere at Kassel:

No devotion to a single principle, be it of a harmonic or a contrapuntal kind, lies in the structure, because the idea in composing has been, on the contrary, to devote the handling of all resources to the utmost clarification of the dramatic events. The intention is to make the inner nature of the action as clear as possible to the audience. . . . I certainly have not been limited by any principle signified by such catch-words as "tonal," "atonal," "linear," or the like.

Perhaps, though, he was claiming a little more for his procedures than he should have, for some years later he described composing the score "as in a dream, once in a while grasping the implications of the text in a flash, then groping in the dark, following my creative instinct rather than intellectual perception."¹⁴ If so, his instinct served him and the drama well. Despite all the confusion earlier described, he contrived to have the music support the action by evoking feelings, emphasizing significant moments, and linking events by the repetition of motifs, and he did this so well that the music actually imposes coherence and integration on the drama and—at least in broad outline—clarifies and even interprets it, making some kind of sense where there had been little or none.

In his program notes Krenek explained that "an attempt is made to unite an entire scene from time to time by simple, easily recognizable harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and coloristic elements." Thus, although he ranged from absolute atonality to the most straightforward triadic tonality, he maintained a more or less conventional musical syntax so that the gist of his musical language could be easily apprehended even when some of the terms were strange. One such term stands at the very center of the music: an ambiguous chord built on fourths from which the music can move in any direction. It opens the opera and the first scene, in which Orpheus and Eurydike describe their love but in ways that hint of anxiety and misgivings beneath their devotion; it returns in the last scene, when the spirit of Eurydike kisses and takes leave of the demented Orpheus; and it introduces and is resolved harmonically in the reassuring tonal epilogue with its affirmation of life. By now one can perceive the chord as a symbol of the relationship of the principals. But Krenek did not want his musical language reduced to a set of narrowly literal meanings inappropriate to the hallucinatory drama.

Individual small motifs appear throughout the whole work, yet [these] are not leitmotifs in the traditional sense. That is, these motifs should not stand for specific thoughts or feelings with which they are associated by repetition; rather, in the representation of the whole, which is continually changing in expression and especially in form, they should produce a general attitude, and therefore are particularly simple, pregnant, and easily identifiable. The solos and ensembles are more or less complete [in themselves] yet always onward flowing and continuous with one another.

Unlike the music of *Zwillingburg* and *Sprung*, this music did not subdivide into self-contained, self-sufficient numbers. Nor was it nearly so contrapuntal, though where counterpoint served the action, Krenek treated it with his usual aplomb—as when he heightened the tension by a fugal interplay among the three Furies and emphasized the contrast in nature between Orpheus and Eurydike by composing a passacaglia for their final scene together. The choral writing in the epilogue, so solidly and consolingly fixed in D major, recalls the affirmative ending of many an oratorio.

Many features of the score remind one of *Wozzeck*. While insisting on Krenek's originality, Hartleb granted the many parallels with Berg's music. The atonal harshness of the scenes of violence; the way the mixture of fatalism, melancholy, and sensuality found in both Eurydike and *Wozzeck*'s common-law wife, Marie, is emphasized by the qualities of the melodies given them and by the tempi and the lush timbres in their scenes—these suggest the powerful influence of the older composer, whom Krenek knew at the time from occasional meetings in the circle of Alma Mahler's friends.

In the letter to his parents describing his second visit to Kokoschka early in 1923, Krenek mentioned that he had acquired and was studying the recently published piano-vocal edition of *Wozzeck*. Soon afterward he wrote to Berg, praising the work and asking questions about Berg's handling of voices. Berg replied graciously in a long, thoughtful letter filled with carefully transcribed examples from and allusions to works by Wagner, Mozart, and Bach to support his insistence on the preeminence of the voice as the supreme instrument. In scoring an opera, Berg asserted, one must accommodate all other musical elements to the voice's limitations and its function in the drama, and Krenek would find in this regard no difference between Berg and the classicists, particularly Mozart.¹⁵ Shortly thereafter, when Krenek was in Vienna visiting his parents, Berg wrote inviting him to tea and expressing the hope that Krenek would play some of his own works. In this way a friendship between them began, but it did not become close until Krenek returned some years later to live in Vienna.

As for *Orpheus und Eurydike*, Krenek remarked many years later that he did not use *Wozzeck* as a model and doubted if there were any direct influence.¹⁶ The resemblances with *Wozzeck* probably arise from the effect on both composers of Schönberg's atonal works and the orchestration of Schreker, for whose opera *Der ferne*

Klang Berg had prepared the piano-vocal edition in 1911. And of course, the scoring of *Orpheus und Eurydike* suggests that Krenek took to heart Berg's observations about the voice. In any event, the resemblances offer a measure of how far Krenek had advanced beyond his earlier operatic scores.

For a work of such high excellence (Krenek himself once placed it among the half-dozen or so of his most important works),¹⁷ *Orpheus und Eurydike* has been lamentably neglected. Soon after it was finished Fritz Busch, director of the Dresden State Opera, considered staging it, but when audience dissatisfaction forced him to close *Palestrina* by the antimodernist Hans Pfitzner, he decided it would be too risky to present an advanced work. Rosenstock, who had been obliged to give up the idea of doing *Sprung*, also considered staging it in Darmstadt, but nothing came of this idea either. During his trip to Paris in 1924 Krenek spoke with Kokoschka about having performances there, but the theater they had in mind proved to be too small. Finally Bekker, who had been interested in the opera ever since Krenek joined his staff, staged it in Kassel, where it opened on November 24, 1926. Yet the production depended wholly on funds from a subscription series, and the local response was such that it was dropped after six performances. Many years later it was given a concert performance under Krenek's direction by the government radio station in Vienna, which was rebroadcast later by the BBC. But it was not staged again after Kassel until the Graz performances of 1973–1974. (According to Wolfgang Rogge, when Kokoschka's play was recorded for broadcast in 1961, selections from Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* were used for the incidental music.)

The critics, however, considered the Kassel premiere one of the notable successes of a twentieth-century opera. All were impressed by the power of the work. Karl Holl praised it for bringing clarity and coherence to the play. Stuckenschmidt, who had been reserved in his comments on Krenek's first operas, particularly liked the care with which the elements were made to fit the drama yet moved according to musical logic, accumulating in their course great expressive force. Still another critic wrote in an unsigned review that this mighty composition would humble any musician.

But all for naught. Except for the broadcasts, the score remained on the shelf until Hartleb, who had attended the premiere and had wanted ever since to stage the opera, brought it to Graz, fifty years after its completion. Well sung and skillfully directed, this production, which attracted listeners from Vienna, over one hundred miles away, was a triumph of musical intelligence and sympathetic understanding. Yet it, too, disappeared after its six subscription performances.

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The most immediate stimuli to the creation of *Jonny spielt auf* were Krenek's trip to Paris and the opportunities he had after joining the staff of the Kassel State Opera to learn about new techniques of stagecraft, which carried an unusual fascination

for him. But other stimuli can be traced as far back as his childhood, when for Christmas he received a book with pictures of the newest wonders of technology, including a giant locomotive serving the Santa Fe Railroad. Beginning with the summer journeys to Innsbruck, he had loved train travel, and this locomotive, along with all the colorful newspaper stories about America, seemed to indicate that a journey to the west—to America, and above all to the Southwest and California—would transport one from gray, inhibited, gloomy Middle Europe to a sunny land of unrestricted freedom and romance. So, in time, a westward-rushing train drawn by a vast locomotive became in *Jonny* the means of escape to a jazzy, joyous new American life.

The train's antithesis was a great Alpine glacier, in which all life, even the muted, melancholy, Middle European kind, was suspended, and this symbol, too, came out of the past. On one of his hikes in the Tirol with Anna, Krenek had found in a shelter a tattered annual published by a mountaineering society that contained an article about how the bodies of persons falling into glacial crevasses were preserved and might reappear long afterward. He made notes on the possibility of using being frozen and returning to life as the theme of an opera—then forgot all about it until early in 1925, when he was working on *Bluff*. He had attended a modern dance recital, performed without music, and had stopped afterward at a café for some refreshment. Suddenly, for no reason that he could account for, he remembered the story and on the spot began hastily sketching the plot of what would become his greatest popular success.

But for all his excitement, he still had to finish *Bluff*, and it was not until the summer, as he was waiting to take up his new duties at Kassel, that he looked into his sketches once more. Things continued slowly until early January 1926, when he saw a Negro revue in Frankfurt, *Chocolate Kiddies*, which he told his parents was "fabulous."* Spurred by this experience, he quickly completed a libretto in which a Negro entertainer is the apotheosis of carefree happiness, and began composing almost at once, beginning with the final scene, in which the entertainer, standing on top of the world, fiddles a jazzy tune, to which the chorus of travelers bound for America sings about how, through dancing, old Europe will give way to the new world and liberty. From there he shifted to the beginning, finishing the first act on May 2 and the second on June 10, after which he set off on a trip to, appropriately, southern France, which he reached by way of the Alps.

Beneath the surface, *Jonny*, so sensational at the time with its jazz, its novelties of

*Duke Ellington claimed that he wrote the music for *Chocolate Kiddies* (see his *Music Is My Mistress* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973], 70), and in his authoritative study *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 319, Gunther Schuller also attributes the music to Ellington. However, in the most carefully researched biography of Ellington to date, James Lincoln Collier states: "What, if anything, Ellington had to do with this show is open to question. I have found no evidence that any of his songs were actually used" (*Duke Ellington* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1987], 50). The revue was intended for Broadway but never made it there. It was an immense hit in Germany, where the music was performed by Sam Wooding's orchestra.

staging, and its picaresque black demihero, is a fairly conventional sexual farce with some genial incidental satire on modish fads in the manner of *Sprung*. Max, a somewhat doleful composer of operas, meets a singer named Anita while both are wandering on a glacier, to which he has been drawn by its inhuman stillness and serenity. But these frighten Anita, who wants only to return to the bright lights of the resort hotel far below. Thus acquainted, they are soon living together. Then Anita, to Max's dismay, must leave to fulfill an engagement in Paris. While there she is importuned by Jonny, a black American jazz violinist, and rescued by Daniello, a concert artist and ladies' man, with whom she spends the night. While they are together, Jonny steals Daniello's Amati violin.

After Anita's return, Max learns of her dalliance through a cruel trick of Daniello's and rushes off to the glacier, intending to immolate himself in its white calm and forgetfulness. But the Voice of the Glacier rejects him and commands him to return to life. Here, at the decisive moment of the action, he hears from a faraway loud-speaker at the resort hotel the voice of Anita singing a song he had written for her. This draws him back, and he hurries to overtake Anita, who is about to leave for America, and in the haste and confusion comes unwittingly into possession of the stolen violin. Arrested as a thief, he finally takes charge of his life and orders the police to take him to the railroad station. In a hectic, pell-mell finish, Daniello is run over—on stage—by the boat-train's locomotive, Jonny gets the Amati violin once more, Max leaps aboard the departing train to join Anita, and all ends as Jonny on his globe “spielt auf”—plays on.

Despite its farcical elements, which include a frenzied chase through city streets that is straight out of the Keystone Cops (showing how greatly movies influenced the conception and staging of the opera), Krenek intended to treat seriously a theme much used by novelists since Goethe and by such Expressionist poets as Werfel and Gottfried Benn: the longing of an introverted and alienated artist to flee from spiritual despair and take part in the supposedly carefree, instinctive life of ordinary people. Like so many before him since Rousseau, Krenek romanticized the impulsive primitive man, embodied here, as in *Sprung*, by a black entertainer from the supposedly wild realm of jazz whom Krenek later called “a sort of sophisticated latter-day Papageno.” When he conceived his libretto, Krenek had never met a Negro or an American. Nevertheless, “Jonny and his America stood for the fullness of life, optimistic affirmation, freedom from futile speculation, and devotion to the happiness of the moment.” Jonny had a special personal importance: he was “the fulfillment of a wish dream, for I felt that all these elements, which I admired so greatly and passionately desired to acquire for myself, were really foreign to my nature.” In fact they were not, but they were severely inhibited by the side of him represented by Max, “the self-conscious, brooding, introspective Central European intellectual, as opposed to the happy, straightforward representative of the Western world. In the final climax of the play [*sic*] he succeeded in an act of free will in

breaking through the walls of his inhibitions and escaping into the outside world of freedom."¹⁸

In view of the ugly response of some reviewers to the representation of a black man as the lover of a white woman (Anita's maid) and as a charmer dominating the fashionable dancers from on high like a god with his adorers; in view, too, of Krenek's use of "nigger-boy" in *Sprung* to designate a black dancer, it is important that his attitude toward black people be understood. He was absolutely innocent of any prejudice against them. He knew very little about them. His notion of what they were like was based on stereotypes from popular fiction and the entertainment world—from *Chocolate Babies* and stories about Josephine Baker's frenzied dancing in a costume consisting of three bracelets and a girdle of bananas. He had no idea that "nigger-boy," which he borrowed, as other German speakers did, from English, was a humiliating term. Nor did he perceive that those who professed to envy black people for their spontaneity, their childlike directness, and their unselfconscious exuberance were patronizing them. He really meant it when he said that he passionately desired the fullness of life that he embodied in Jonny. He was not and never would be a racist.

Krenek used three primary symbols to explicate his theme of escaping into freedom: the glacier, which is the central object of the opera and represents dehumanized, life-denying, excessive intellectualism; the violin, which represents life-affirming sensuality, even in the hands of the corrupt Daniello; and the train, which represents liberation. The several hotels merge into a single secondary symbol, a miniature Paris as it were, filled with bright lights, dance tunes, and pleasure seekers; it stands for the community toward which the alienated artist yearns. In the final scene, the station clock, less an explicit symbol than an evocative image, is transformed into Jonny's slowly revolving globe. As he plays, the crowd below him sings:

The bell has tolled, the old time goes, a new time begins now. Don't miss the glorious path. The crossing is announced into the unknown land of freedom. The crossing has begun, and Jonny plays for us to dance. For now the new world comes across the ocean with might and overpowers old Europe through the dance.¹⁹

Still, it is hard to take the central theme seriously. Max's lugubriousness is no more impressive than Prince Orloffsky's boredom. For *Jonny* is that familiar anomaly, the work of art that takes on a disposition of its own, a disposition different from the one its creator meant for it (and may continue to believe that it has). From the beginning, audiences have perceived *Jonny* as a mildly naughty romp meant only for amusement. Its somber moments, such as Max's tormented vigil or his search for immolation by the glacier, are taken as bits of agreeable pathos necessary for the action (like Duke Orsino's melancholy at the outset of *Twelfth Night*) but of no great significance. In their barbarous way the Nazis took the opera seriously, not because

they supposed it was meant to be taken that way but because they regarded it as an affront to Aryan dignity and morality. Krenek was greatly disappointed by the general response, for Max and his fate were of profound personal concern. He was trying to make a point about how “to live,” as he put it after his visit to Paris, and people paid the effort no more heed than they had paid to Goldhaar’s attempts to leap over his shadow.

The fault, if such it was, lay with the lightheartedness of so much of the music, particularly that which remained in the mind of the audience—though no amount of solemnity in the score could have overcome the effect of the low comedy of the automobile chase, of Jonny’s sneaking about as he steals and hides Daniello’s violin, or even of Daniello’s death beneath the locomotive, which, as a stage event, is so monstrously ludicrous that instead of horrifying it titillates the audience as just one more extravagant absurdity. Compared with Krenek’s earlier works—with the exception of *Sprung* and *Bluff*—Jonny has little to surprise the listener. (The dance music was surprising only in that it was used in an opera. Considered strictly as music, it was singularly bland.) Many scenes, for example, conclude with the simplest unadorned triads. To be sure, in using massive sonorities and chords constructed by piling fourths and fifths on one another and roughening them with abrasive diminished seconds, Krenek tries for portentousness in the moment before the curtain rises on Max invoking the spirit of the glacier while Anita cries out in fear of its “all-embracing death.” He likewise manages to suggest an obscure beatitude when the glacier commands Max to turn back toward life, by scoring its “Voice” for high women’s voices and celesta in a manner that recalls the chorus of maidens in the visionary epilogue of *Orpheus und Eurydike*. But for the most part, where Krenek uses fortissimos and gritty dissonances for emphasis, the accompanying action is neither menacing nor solemn but simply melodramatic or even funny, as in the musical uproar when Daniello discovers his violin has been stolen. The score suggests how great his rage is, which delights the audiences because he is so loathsome.

Anita’s song is delectable and filled with enharmonic shifts that even Schubert might have admired, but it is more nearly sentimental than poignant. (She is supposed to be rehearsing an excerpt from Max’s newest opera anyway, not expressing any feelings of her own.) A “blues” number (that is, a melody with flatted thirds, not a true blues) with which Jonny takes leave of his current love is plainly intended to be a hit tune, and it succeeded: a sheet music version, arrangements for salon orchestras and dance bands, and popular recordings were purchased by an eager public along with songs from current Broadway and West End musicals. Whatever dismay the audience might feel when Anita consents to spend the night with the oily Daniello is offset by a derisively mawkish tango, which accompanies the surrender presumably taking place behind Daniello’s closed door. Even counterpoint is put to the service of gaiety, giving a special verve to the spats of Jonny and his

mistress and to the bewildered rushing-about of the police. A repetition of Jonny's blues song at the end of the first act is led up to by clever canonical writing that begins with three voices and gradually weaves in three more, achieving with the strictest control an effect of comical tumult (as in the trial scene of *Sprung*, when Goldhaar is brought before Dr. Berg, the charlatan become judge).

What the ordinary listener found most entertaining, and thus most contradictory as regards serious intent, was of course the use of the so-called jazz. Krenek already knew some American popular music from recordings, and while he was composing the score of *Jonny* he heard Paul Whiteman's orchestra on its first European tour. He was awed by its size—more than twenty performers, compared with the usual five or six who played for dancers in hotels and cafés—and fascinated by the new sounds, new materials, and new musical images such an ensemble could create.²⁰ He had soaked for hours in the tepid fox-trots Anna kept going on their gramophone in Zürich; for one so skilled at parody as he, imitating the more obvious features of such music was child's play.

But although Jonny supposedly played this music for a living, Krenek actually used very little of it, employing it mostly for characterization and for evoking the atmosphere of smart resorts. Only at the opera's end does this material become thematically important in exalting "the new world" that "overpowers old Europe through the dance." When it does appear it consists principally of short passages scored for such instruments as saxophones, piano and pianola (player piano), xylophone, slide whistle, castanets, and flexaton, a form of rattle popular with drummers in dance bands. Generally (but not always) homophonic, the music uses flatted thirds and sevenths, simple eighth note—quarter note—eighth note syncopations, and dotted eighths and sixteenths—to be played exactly as written and not, as in true jazz, in a way that includes coming in a fraction of a second behind the beat and hovering between true dotted eighths and sixteenths and eighth-note triplets with the first two notes tied. Only Jonny's song "Leb' wohl, mein Schatz" (Farewell, my dear) lasts long enough to count as a jazz quasi-aria. But just this little in the staid environments of most European opera houses was so electrifying that *Jonny* was at once labeled a "jazz opera," and audiences went away from performances convinced they had been hearing jazz all the way through. This novelty, with the sensational stage effects (even in 1980 one could not help eagerly anticipating the locomotive, nor was one disappointed), made it virtually impossible for most people to regard *Jonny* as anything more than beguiling musical theater, and in fact that is just what it was and to this day remains. Cocteau might have found parts of it a bit naive, but on the whole it would have pleased him.

The opera is so much a product of Krenek's first year at Kassel that one might expect it to have had its premiere in that city. But by the time it was ready, Bekker was committed to doing *Orpheus und Eurydike*, so Krenek approached his friend Rosenstock at Darmstadt. The staff there did not like it, nor did the staff at Ham-

burg (though it eagerly took the opportunity to stage it the following year). Gustav Brecher, director of the Leipzig Opera, however, liked *Jonny* as soon as he saw the score and wanted to conduct it himself. A man of wealth and patrician style, Brecher was a fine musician who could afford to do as he pleased. The stage director, young and talented Walther Brüggemann, who had mounted *Spring* in Frankfurt, was another adventurer who liked taking chances, and he saw in *Jonny* occasions for dazzling stage effects. For the premiere, which took place on February 10, 1927, he used all manner of devices. For the scene of Max's return to the glacier, for instance, he used the medium of film to project a misty image of his own face moving his lips in time with the Voice of the Glacier. He even designed and constructed a synchronizer by means of which Brecher's conducting could be meshed with a film of his features. Krenek disliked this expensive gimmick, thinking it kitsch, but the audience loved it. On the whole the production was excellent, being well directed, well acted, and brilliantly staged, as even the most resistant reviewers conceded.

And most reviewers were resistant, in spite of the frenzy of approval that erupted when the curtain came down on the first act and that brought Krenek back again and again at the conclusion. He had given the audience just what it wanted. Tired of experiments, it had nevertheless developed a taste for shock effects, and this mixture of scandalousness and scarcely believable visual effects with plenty of comfortable tonality and familiar conventions from operas, operettas, and cinema—the melancholy artist, feckless in life and love, the pert chambermaid (Jonny's mistress, Yvonne), the clumsy cops, the pompous officials—provided just the right frisson. Back people came, night after night, so that by April 1928, a little more than a year after the opening, Brecher wrote to Krenek that *Jonny* had been performed twenty-five times in Leipzig.

Most reviews were negative. A few, like that of "P. D." in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Chemnitz, which appeared a few days after the premiere, complained about the lack of melismata that would allow moments of rest amid all the clatter, and many thought that *Jonny* was not an opera at all but an operetta, and a bad one at that because solemnity intruded. Whatever it was, it was immoral, a "glorification of unabashed roguery," as the anonymous writer in the influential *Zeitschrift für Musik* put it. This journal, which was founded by Robert Schumann in 1833, enjoyed a reputation for scholarly, judicious criticism, and a hostile review from it would ordinarily do much harm to the career of a young composer. But for Krenek it did not matter.

One commentator who agreed that *Jonny* was an operetta (which it wasn't: there are only five spoken words in all) but thought it an excellent one was the eminent musicologist Alfred Einstein, who had joined the staff of the *Berliner Tageblatt* shortly before *Jonny* opened in Berlin on October 9, 1927. Krenek, he wrote, had successfully reestablished the connection between the composer and the audience,

not, as Wagner would have done, by trying to raise the audience, but by coming down to its level. "Like Krenek himself, we leave in the dark whether anything truly lies in the 'deeper significance' of his piece." It was enough for him that *Jonny* was sung with skill. "In opera there are human beings, in operetta (and in *commedia dell'arte*), figures. In Krenek there are figures, marionettes, with which one can do anything. . . . The whole thing would succeed as a puppet play—yes, it *is* a puppet play . . . , acted by living singers." Einstein thought the music, especially in the ensembles, extremely witty for the most part, if a bit thin where Krenek tried to be serious.

The prim writer in the *Zeitschrift für Musik* conceded that Krenek had a flair for old-fashioned burlesque opera, but he wondered how the "Negro lust scene" (Jonny's meeting with Anita) would make Germans look before the rest of the world, especially when it heard of the enthusiasm with which *Jonny* had been received. "Krenek is actually a Czech, sailing, however, under the German flag; we, moreover, encourage his blunder, and thus the guilt falls on us." Friedrich Schwabe, writing in *Der Reichsbote* of Berlin, expressed horror at the "heaped measure of lasciviousness" and the fact that the Berlin opening had been sponsored by a local press society; he then summed up thus: "The Negro Jonny plays on a stolen master violin and all, all, dance to its tones. The culture of the white race lies on the ground; the Negro plays on." In the end he placed his hopes on the nobler nature of the German folk.

Such an outright appeal to racism was not a trivial matter. During the occupation of the Ruhr the French had sent in Senegalese troops, encouraging them to humiliate the local people. What especially outraged the latter was the ease with which black soldiers, having plenty of money and stationed in a land that had lost so many of its young men, seduced German girls. Jonny's swaggering and boasting of his sexual successes was just the thing to enflame old hatreds, and this resentment, along with the cry of immorality, was quickly taken up by the Nazis and their sympathizers, who planted stink bombs in the theater and demonstrated in the streets when *Jonny* opened in Munich.

But there was no stopping the opera. During the season of 1927–1928 it appeared on fifty different stages and was translated into Russian, Hungarian, Slovene, Serbian, Polish, and Flemish. Requests for performance parts poured in to Universal Edition. And, as Wolfgang Rogge has pointed out, other composers unblushingly sought to cash in on Jonny's popularity.²¹ Eugen d'Albert wrote a jazz opera called *Die schwarze Orchidee* (The black orchid, with a libretto by the same von Levetzow who had prepared *Bluff* for Krenek), which featured a Negro protagonist and celebrated the triumph of Americanism. It opened on December 1, 1928, in Leipzig—somewhat to Brecher's chagrin, for he wrote to Krenek shortly afterward that he had not wanted to do this opera, but Hertzka of Universal Edition had been insistent.²² Emil von Reznicek got in ahead of d'Albert with *Satuala*, which with

Jonny formed part of the repertoire of the 1927–1928 season at Leipzig. Rezníček wrote his own text, into which he crowded a Hawaiian setting, hula dancing, Negro spirituals, and some folklore purportedly taken from South American Indians. Krenek himself followed the crowd with a one-act comic opera, *Schwergewicht* (The heavyweight), which he completed in Kassel on June 10, 1927.

Even Alma Mahler tried to cash in. After *Jonny* opened in Vienna she demanded with characteristic effrontery that Krenek pay her twelve thousand Swiss francs on the grounds that it was only thanks to her intervention that *Jonny* was finally staged in Krenek's native city. In fact it was not she but Hertzka who had acted on his behalf, but Hertzka was so anxious to avoid a quarrel with her that he urged Krenek to pay her the money as a "one-time, voluntary gift," which Krenek did, being well fixed at the moment. Years afterward, he and Anna met in Beverly Hills, and she returned the money to him.²³

Ironically, *Jonny* failed miserably in Paris and New York, the two cities that for Krenek most evoked the new spirit toward which he and Max yearned. Paris is obviously the city where Anita encounters Daniello. When the opera, retitled *Jonny mène la danse* (Jonny leads the dance), opened there late in June 1928 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, it earned the scorn of audiences and critics alike. The bored stage director did virtually nothing to prepare the production and seemed to understand so little of what was going on that Krenek, who attended the rehearsals, concluded that he had not bothered to read the libretto. The music was excellent, but a clumsy translation of the text provoked laughter at some points and hisses at others. Henry Malherbe, writing in *Le temps*, wondered how this feeble and naive stuff could excite such polemics elsewhere; and the nameless critic of the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* expressed surprise that *Jonny* had been such a success in Germany, for its triumphs "had caused general astonishment here and had not contributed to the honor of German artistic taste." He doubted that it would soon be done again in Paris, and he was right, for it never has been.

Although New York is not named in the opera, one can presume that it is Jonny's hometown. Moreover, the final image of Jonny on the globe is precisely the kind of icon used by illustrators and set designers to symbolize the Manhattan of Broadway revues, Harlem musicians, skyscrapers, and Jazz Age flappers. Yet the elaborate production at New York's Metropolitan Opera House, which opened on January 19, 1929, only bored the audience and provided the critics—who knew, of course, what the music of black jazz performers really sounded like—with an irresistible chance to make fun of European conceptions of jazz. The opera was canceled after three performances. And in fact, Krenek was by now so thoroughly bored with *Jonny* himself that it scarcely mattered to him.

Jonny's day was over, at least for the time being. Its novelties had been talked about, written about, and imitated so widely that they had lost their piquancy. The fashionable world it had mildly mocked seemed an anachronism in the midst of the

political and economic crises that were bringing the Nazis to power. Topical allusions that once amused had become mere curiosities. So the opera disappeared into the mists of legend, becoming what Alan Rich called, "beyond doubt, the most famous unknown opera of this century." A performance in concert form, directed by Gunther Schuller at the New England Conservatory of Music in 1976, caused, Rich said, "astonishment that the score is so good . . . full of soaring, ruddy melodic lines [and] touching moments of great beauty."²⁴

A brilliant full production by the Vienna State Opera in 1980 then showed that when the opera was perceived not as a temporary sensation, as it had not been for five decades, but simply as a vehicle for entertainment, it still possessed great verve and vitality. Scheduled for the annual Vienna Festival in recognition of Krenek's approaching eightieth birthday, this revival nearly failed. Axel Corti, the stage director, and Frieder Klein, the set designer, decided to present *Jonny* as an outrageously stylized period piece. Instead of taking Max seriously, they dressed him in costumes based on familiar surrealist paintings, which made his ruminations and complaints comical. The works of Magritte provided the bases for the decor and distorted perspectives of several scenes, while the drawings of Saul Steinberg seemed to inspire others—particularly the auto chase and the turmoil in the railroad station. Krenek was intensely annoyed by this treatment. Indeed, amusing as the approach undoubtedly was, it almost caused the production to founder, for the sets were so complicated and cumbersome and took so long to change that the opening performance in the Theater an der Wien lasted over four hours! By the time the production arrived in Graz the following October, however, things had been streamlined, and the performance lasted about as long as that of a conventional grand opera. Krenek's displeasure over the surrealism had not diminished, but he accepted the production with good grace and took his bows with the performers before the delighted audience. It could be argued that Corti and Klein understood better than Krenek himself the true and durable nature of this still immensely enjoyable work.

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After finishing *Jonny*, Krenek wrote the words and music of three one-act operas: *Der Diktator*, completed on August 8, 1926; *Das geheime Königreich* (The secret kingdom), completed on February 17, 1927; and *Schweregewicht, oder Die Ehre der Nation* (Heavyweight, or the pride of the nation), completed on June 10, 1927. Like *Jonny*, they were intended to appeal widely and were tonal in varying degrees of strictness. Though often presented together, they were not meant to form a cycle; they did, however, share a common theme: the nature of power. A secondary theme was the relationship between power and sexual attractiveness. And all three exhibited the disdain toward man in the mass that figured in *Zwingburg* and *Sprung*.

In his program notes for their premieres, which took place simultaneously in Wiesbaden on May 6, 1928, Krenek wrote that in conceiving *Der Diktator* he had

been interested not in political ideology but in the personality of a man whose qualities were expressed in his dominance of his surroundings. (Later he admitted that he had had Mussolini in mind, but he thought of him more in terms of his reputation as a womanizer than as a fascist saber-rattler.) "The dictator," he asserted, "is the supreme specimen of men who are at home in the world. . . . Only before the irrational does he retreat, not so much out of fear as because he can do nothing with it, he cannot dominate it." About to launch a war for personal aggrandizement, the dictator—who much resembles Daniello—by chance sees Maria, the wife of an officer who has been blinded in an earlier war, and immediately wants her. Maria has planned to kill him to avenge her husband's mutilation but is overcome by his physical aura and offers herself to him instead. Overhearing them, the dictator's wife picks up a pistol that Maria has laid aside, fires at him, but kills Maria, who has thrown herself in the way of the bullet. The blind officer, hearing the shot, gropes his way into the room and, sensing disaster, screams his wife's name as the dictator flees. In his notes, Krenek pointed out that the seduction scene had been suggested by the wooing of Anne in the opening of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. He counted on the intensity of the music and its capacity for compressing time and space to make convincing Maria's abrupt shift from murderous hatred to sexual desire. It does. But if afterwards one reflects upon the scene, Maria's behavior seems even more improbable than Anita's giving herself to Daniello.

The king of the second one-acter is much like Max in his melancholy passivity and desire to flee the world. When the citizens of his fairy-tale kingdom start a revolution mainly because they are bored with their life, he blames his own unworthiness. His wife, who wants to rule, would agree with this view, but his fool tries to console him by maintaining that he should seek his true realm. Eventually he flees in the fool's clothing to a magic forest, where the queen, who had tried to seduce the leader of the rebels, has been changed into a tree. He is about to hang himself on this very tree, when it tells him that in the forest he will find his proper kingdom. Understanding his destiny at last, he muses, "I thought I could be king only if I dominated the most mighty. Is there anything greater than this flower, this wonder of God?" Having decided to make natural beauty his realm, he falls into a peaceful slumber, and the fool restores the crown to his head. As Krenek explained in his notes, the king has learned that "power over life requires not external symbols of might but resignation and inner meditative control." Krenek was deeply in earnest, but unfortunately the bathos of the work makes one cringe with embarrassment.

Schwergewicht, which Krenek called a burlesque operetta by reason of its farce and the triviality of its characters, got its start when Krenek read that the German ambassador to the United States said that channel swimmers and similar national heroes had done more to win world respect for the German people than artists and scholars. At the moment, Max Schmeling, later to be briefly the heavyweight cham-

pion of the world, was a popular figure in Germany, a pride of the nation, and the stories about him in the press helped to determine Krenek's choice of a prizefighter as his athlete, Ochsenchwanz ("Oxtail"). Evelyn, his wife, is preparing with the dancing master Gaston for a marathon Charleston contest. Their practicing serves as a cover for an affair. Ochsenchwanz catches them kissing, drives Gaston off, and locks up Evelyn. Gaston returns with an electric exercise machine that the heavyweight has ordered, persuades him to try it out, and then, with the machine going and the heavyweight trapped on it, frees Evelyn and leaves with her. A government official enters and informs Ochsenchwanz that he has been chosen to represent his country at the next Olympiad, for he is truly the pride of the nation. When he departs, the athlete is left despairingly exercising on his new machine. As Krenek noted, the heroic prizefighter's power is more apparent than real, for he is easily overcome by a petty rogue—who, he might have added, is an artist of sorts.

The score of *Schwergewicht* is enlivened by the use of glockenspiel, xylophone, flexaton, banjo, and tambourine, and although it follows more closely than *Jonny* the popular music of the day, it is saved from banality by its satirical parodies, which bring to mind the witticisms of Satie and Les Six. Rhythms, in particular, are used for comical characterizations and for making events already ridiculous even more absurd. In all, this is an amusing trifle. *Der Diktator* is a laborious melodrama lacking any musical distinction. But *Das geheime Königreich*, for all its mawkish libretto, is a genuinely interesting composition. It is also the least tonal and most contrapuntal of the three. Krenek is at his sardonic best in the music for a scene in which the ladies of the queen's court try to seduce the fool to the rhythms of a tango that moves back and forth startlingly between tonality and atonality. This is followed by a scene involving seven voices grouped in ways that adroitly match the structure to the characters and action by shifting the idiom between contrapuntal and homophonic. As the king draws nearer to his rightful destiny, the music becomes appealingly melodic; some of Krenek's lovely tonal writing for high women's voices is featured when the king, accompanied by the ladies of the court, describes his new-found happiness. The scorn that the audience is expected to feel for the pointless uprising, for the rebel leader's lust for power, and for the people's swinishness is suggested by a deliberately tedious marching song in which the populace praises the glorious revolution. Just as the music of *Jonny* helps one overlook the inanities of Max's soliloquies, so the many excellences of this score enable one to tolerate the silly libretto. Whatever one may think of them now, the three one-acters obey both the precept "useful, entertaining, and practical" and Krenek's new principle of making the music serve the drama. They were well received when first performed at Wiesbaden, and a year later Brecher reported that they had been the most powerful and unanimous success of his five years at Leipzig²⁵—a startling fact given the triumph of the Leipzig premiere of *Jonny*. Although they are not often performed,

these three works have always pleased their audiences, recently at a festival in Minneapolis celebrating Krenek's eightieth year.

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In the final hours of 1927, as Krenek sat sipping coffee in a café across from the Vienna State Opera House and waiting to take his curtain calls at the conclusion of another sensational opening of *Jonny*, he was two and a half years beyond the despair he had felt when he turned down Bekker's job offer at Kassel. He had changed the direction and character of his music and found a popular audience. He had learned many new things about stagecraft. He had acquired more practical experience as a librettist and composer of operas. He had developed considerable skill as an essayist. He had created the most immediately successful musical drama of the twentieth century. He was becoming a man of means, able to live and compose as he pleased. For him, surely, the wisdom of the students at the academy had turned out to be right: the way to the top did lie through opera.

Now he was there. What should he do next?

5 · NEOROMANTICISM AND THE INFLUENCE OF SCHUBERT: 1927–1930

Early in the summer of 1927, Paul Bekker was appointed director of the state theater and opera house at Wiesbaden and invited his assistant to go with him. Krenek joined him there in August and soon found that he liked neither his new job nor the city. He did not need the work, for royalties from *Jonny* were pouring in and Universal Edition had sold the movie rights to the opera to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer for approximately ten thousand dollars, of which Krenek received a substantial portion.¹ Now famous and financially secure, he wanted to devote himself wholly to composing. Moreover, his relations with Bekker were strained by their having suddenly become rivals for the favors of the same lady. Thus when *Jonny* opened in Berlin on October 9 and was an instant hit, thereby assuring Krenek of freedom from worry over money for a long time to come, he decided to resign his position. A month later he left for Vienna.

At first he was too restless to settle down to work, and in a matter of days he was off for Paris, where he put up at the Hôtel Foyot. There the American composer and concert pianist George Antheil sought him out and asked for advice on his opera *Transatlantic*, yet another of the attempts to cash in on the public's interest in the reputed high jinks of the international set that had helped to make *Jonny* such a success. Krenek was sufficiently impressed with Antheil to write to Hans Heinsheimer, head of the opera department at Universal Edition, urging him to add the American to the roster of young modernists sponsored by that firm. Shortly afterward he journeyed to Zürich for a round of visits with friends and a quick trip to St. Moritz, where he spent Christmas alone before hurrying back to Vienna for the New Year's Eve opening of *Jonny*. But even the prodigious popularity of the opera in his native city and his fine resolutions about composing could not keep him there. Lonely and still restless, he set out for Paris and the Hôtel Foyot once again on

January 8. After a month doing the town it was back to Vienna, where he remained except for occasional quick trips to Kassel, to see the Rubensohns and a woman of the theater company in whom he had become interested, and Wiesbaden, where, despite the new coolness between himself and Bekker, his three one-act operas had their premiere. By May, however, boredom again sent him to Paris for a month, where he endured the unfortunate production of *Jonny* that was so roundly roasted. Finally, after sporadic rambling in the south of France, he determined to make Vienna his permanent home and rented an apartment in Hietzing not far from Schönbrunn Palace. Alban Berg and Max Brand, whose opera *Machinist Hopkins* was soon to have a popular success comparable with *Jonny's*, were his near neighbors.

Working conditions in Vienna may have seemed propitious, but performance conditions were not. For the latter he would have been much better off in Berlin, where he had sponsors like Schünemann and Erdmann and where during the 1928–1929 season his works were staged at all three major opera houses: *Jonny* at the State Opera House, *Orpheus und Eurydike* at the Haus unter den Linden, and his one-acters at the Kroll Opera House.* To be sure, his parents and publishers were in Vienna, but these were scarcely compelling attractions. The problem was more his long-standing dislike of Germany, where he had always felt like an exile, and particularly of Berlin. The geniality of *Jonny* belied Krenek's loathing of many features of the Jazz Age, especially as they were manifested in the German capital. (Brecht's and Weill's *Mahagonny* more nearly represented his true feelings than *Jonny*.) His impish side responded happily to the gaiety of Paris as perceived by a tourist, but the spirit of Berlin seemed to him something else: what was amusing in Paris was boorish there. He was disgusted by the ostentation, the jangle and gaudiness, the boom mentality, the exploitative outlook, which he also saw in other German cities.

It was this environment and not concern over the Nazi hoodlums and their attacks on modernism that sent him back to Vienna. That city's conservatism, though unpropitious for performances of his music—except, of course, for *Jonny*—appealed to him in his present mood. Serenity and comparative isolation would be easy to achieve, he thought, and he told a reporter from the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* that he could best concentrate on his composing in Vienna.² To this activity he soon added book reviewing and writing on miscellaneous topics, for he had received from Karl Holl, who had succeeded Bekker as music editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, an invitation to contribute to the literary and artistic pages of that paper, which he promptly did.

Well and good, but the lack of performance opportunities for new works was to

*In 1927 the Prussian Ministry of Culture established a special unit of the State Opera for the performance of new works and of traditional works in nontraditional ways, to which Otto Klemperer was appointed as director. The ministry's actions were distinctly at odds with the conservatism that was gathering strength throughout Germany. Because performances were given in the Kroll Theater, the unit quickly became known as the Kroll Opera.

have serious consequences. The 1927–1928 season saw only two Vienna premieres in that city's opera houses, of which *Jonny* was one. The next season there were none. Rudolf Kolisch, who had studied with Schreker and Schönberg, had formed a string quartet in 1922 and with it endeavored to propagate the music of the Schönberg circle, but audiences were so small that performances seemed semiprivate affairs. The same was true of the occasional concerts put on by the local chapter of the ISCM, which was dominated by Schönberg's pupils and friends. The arrangers of the programs of the Philharmonic, the Konzertverein, and the Tonkünstlerkonzerte, which provided along with the two opera houses all but a small portion of the art music of the city, had not changed in outlook since the days when they drove Gustav Mahler to despair. With Schreker gone, the Music Academy had fallen into the hands of reactionaries whose ideas about music were in accord with the bombastic pronouncements of Julius Korngold, the ultraconservative critic of the *Neue Freie Presse* and most powerful single figure in the musical life of the city. On a lower level of readership (but not of hostility toward new music) was Joseph Rinaldini, the critic of the Nazi paper *Deutsch-österreichische Tageszeitung* (*DÖTZ*, as it was commonly called).^{*} A mediocre composer who had studied privately with Schreker when Krenek was enrolled at the academy, Rinaldini had worked on the staff of *Anbruch* from late 1920 to the end of 1922. At some point soon afterward he had conceived a maniacal hatred of what he called the "atonal clique of Universal Edition." He became a member of the paramilitary Heimwehr and a passionate admirer of Hitler and was writing on music for *DÖTZ* when *Jonny* came to Vienna. He probably wrote, and certainly he would have approved, a series of unsigned rabble-rousing articles in *DÖTZ* against *Jonny*. He did sign comments published on January 6, 1928, in which he called Krenek's program notes for the opera a "criminal museum of music," berated their "cultural bolshevism," and in passing referred to Alban Berg as an "atonal Party commissar." Krenek, who had never met him (and never did), could afford for the moment to ignore this diatribe, but later Rinaldini would play a sinister and utterly malicious role in a major crisis of Krenek's life.

Isolation from the raucous world was one thing, but it was quite another to be almost entirely cut off, as Krenek was, from Schünemann, Schnabel, Erdmann, Bekker, and Scherchen. He had known Max Brand when both were studying with Schreker at the Vienna academy, but although the well-to-do Brand was an agreeable host and companion, they remained no more than bare acquaintances. Sometime in late 1922 he had met Alban Berg through the latter's patron, Alma Mahler, and Berg had been courteous and amiable. He still was, but he kept a distance between them, though he did urge Krenek to join the Viennese chapter of the ISCM—which made no difference as far as performances of Krenek's music at ISCM

^{*}He began life as Joseph Anton Dasatiel. In 1922 he was adopted by his stepfather, a Baron Rinaldini, and was soon calling himself Dasatiel-Rinaldini. This became Rinaldini-Dasatiel. Finally, he dropped Dasatiel altogether.

festivals was concerned. Berg also helped him make the acquaintance of Anton Webern, who in time became a profound influence on Krenek's music. For the present, however, Webern remained aloof from Krenek, as did Berg and other admirers and pupils of Schönberg. This group, which included Josef Polnauer, Oskar Strnad, and Egon Wellesz, resembled a monastic order and did not readily admit newcomers. The members knew well how angered Schönberg had been by some satirical remarks on the twelve-tone system that Krenek had made in a talk before the Congress for Aesthetics in 1925. Being themselves votaries of the system, they were also probably a bit offended themselves. Matters had not been helped by the sensational press campaign mounted by Universal Edition on behalf of *Jonny*. This, together with their failure, like that of the general public, to perceive the opera's serious side, inclined them to disparage Krenek for having gone "commercial." Their attitude hurt Krenek and made him wary of approaching them; and although eventually he was accepted as a repentant renegade, he was never allowed to consider himself one of the elect.³

Krenek remained contemptuous of the conservative composers and musicologists at the University of Vienna. He was therefore undismayed when he angered them with a forceful reply to a paper by one of them at the Schubert Congress in Vienna in late November 1928. In a study entitled "Schubert und das Volkslied" (Schubert and folksong), Robert Lach, a senior faculty member, derided what he regarded as Schubert's slovenly incompetence, citing as examples precisely those features of Schubert's music that Krenek admired. Krenek had studied under Lach in the fall of 1919 and thought him a charlatan. Having been told in advance that Lach would maintain that Schubert was an ignorant free-lancer who knew scarcely more than an untutored amateur, Krenek was ready with a brilliant defense entitled "Schubert und wir" (Schubert and ourselves), in which he proclaimed Schubert's originality and mastery. His remarks were very well received and carried the day with most of those present but struck Lach and his colleagues as modernist impertinence and special pleading. From that moment all possibility of cordial relations with or support for his music from the university set was dashed, even had Krenek ever desired them.

Apart from appearing at the congress, Krenek did nothing to call attention to his presence in Vienna. He had, he remarked years afterward, "sneaked" into town and behaved as if he were retired.⁴ In consort with the publicists at Universal Edition he might have used the fame of *Jonny* to establish himself as a figure of influence in the city, but he was disgusted by the misunderstanding of the work and would not. He did not even use it, as he so easily could have, to make more friends and associates, even though he wished he knew more people. The success of the opera had not given him the confidence to overcome his reserve, and he was too shy to approach others or encourage them to approach him. The man who had created a work that many regarded as a peak of sophistication, who had mocked the fashionable world

as if he had experienced it all himself and could now, as from Olympian heights, look on it with amusement tinged with world weariness, this man was utterly ill at ease with all but the closest of friends, such as the Erdmanns, of which he had virtually none in Vienna.

"I never was able to make the best of socially advantageous situations, not in the time when I was connected with the Mahler family, nor later when I had success and money," he wrote in 1941. "Nobody taught me how to proceed. . . . I feel at ease with people only if they know who I am and what I am standing for. I am lost in anonymous relationships." Admitting that he had written his one-act operas in an effort to capitalize on the success of *Jonny*, he recalled how aggrieved he had been that "the right people . . . the Schönberg fellows" had mistrusted his motives and belittled that work. "This undermined any possible determination to continue on the path of worldly success. . . . I retired from it into extreme privacy. That was the cardinal mistake. I should have opened a big house and spent all my money, or much of it, entertaining crowds." When he made these observations, he had been moved by the difference between his own unprosperous circumstances and those of Franz Werfel, who had just sold the movie rights for his novel *The Song of Bernadette* for one hundred thousand dollars. Krenek recalled how skillfully Alma Mahler had entertained the influential and pushed Werfel's career following the success of his novel *Verdi*. *Jonny*, he thought, had been his big hit, his *Verdi*, but he had failed to use it properly.⁵

Meanwhile, he assuaged his loneliness with a second marriage. In Kassel he had met Berta Haas (or Berta Hermann, as she was known on the stage), an actress of small supporting roles and a member of the opera production staff. A person of considerable acumen with regard to staging and stage technology who enjoyed a local reputation for her portrayals of saucy young women in Shakespeare's comedies, she was fifteen years older than Krenek and in temperament unlike the carefree roles in which she specialized. After they were married early in August 1928 at Vienna City Hall (in a civil ceremony because of Krenek's divorce), she gave up her career and withdrew from the world quite as much as Krenek had. They lived until the summer of 1932 in an atelier in the villa of a shoe manufacturer located at 13 Eitelbergergasse in the Thirteenth (Western) District of Vienna, then moved to 6 Mühlbachergasse, some three blocks further west.

While the political turmoil and economic hardship that soon beset Germany made it seem that Krenek had been astute to leave when he did, in fact his behavior really resembled Max's turning away from life toward the isolation and melancholy of the glacier. Despite his empathy with Jonny, despite what he had said after his first visit to Paris about the need for engagement with the world and for rejecting Middle European gloom, despite his almost obsessive trips back to the City of Light, Krenek was withdrawing like Max and the king of *The Secret Kingdom*. Max returned in the end, but the king retreated ever further from the tumult of the mob

into a magical forest where he could devote himself to beauty as Krenek hoped to devote himself to music. Married to a woman who chose to efface herself and live for their happiness in one another, he was cut off from any powerful person of the kind that until now had drawn him into life, advanced his career, and either compelled him to make decisions or made them for him. He was drifting into a somber twilight zone of seclusion, moody introspection, and disconsolation from which he would never again wholly emerge. The comic spirit so responsive to Anna and to Cocteau and the music of *Les Six* was still there, soon to reappear in some charmingly witty essays; though often long in abeyance, it would never leave him. But when the time came for Krenek himself to board a boat-train for America, he did not go as Max had gone, rejoicing in the exuberance, in the “dance,” of the New World. Instead he fled as a fearful and impoverished exile.

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Jonny was the triumphant affirmation of Krenek's return to tonality and the beginning of what he himself has called his Neoromantic period. His change of heart, we know, was occasioned by his first journey to Paris. His change of musical mode was occasioned by his study of Schubert, which had begun under Erdmann. Paradoxically, Erdmann, far from proposing a return to tonality, had encouraged him to explore atonality. But Erdmann (like Ernst Kurth, whose *Lineare Kontrapunkt* had so impressed Krenek) insisted that music was autonomous and must be understood and judged according to its own inherent principles. Consequently, one must be able to account for every note. Music's configurations had nothing to do with meaning in the sense that words mean; they could only “mean” themselves. Above all—and here Erdmann was diametrically opposed to Schreker—music was not the result of some indeterminate surrender of the will to whim and impulse. To illustrate what he meant, Erdmann had gone over innumerable Schubert songs with Krenek before the latter left Berlin for Zürich. In a point-by-point analysis, Erdmann would play passages and sing them in an almost inaudible voice. With great patience and an exact understanding of every detail he showed Krenek how original and skillful the composer had been when constructing his songs.⁶

Using repetition with variation, Schubert would subject melodic lines of singular ease and grace to a profusion of possibilities, ranging from a maneuver as delicate as transferring a single note an octave higher or placing an accent that had not been present in the first appearance to introducing violent harmonic leaps that seemed to transcend all principles of cadencing yet managed in the end to resolve themselves back to a tonal center. A correlative of these leaps was the use of asymmetric phrases so made not by adding or subtracting elements but by making unexpected rhythmic or melodic changes from the original version. These had a musical authenticity that maintained a balance *of effects* even when, considered without regard for these effects, they appeared to throw things out of balance. Schubert's seemingly inexhaust-

ible capacity for inventing such variations gave his music vitality and plasticity that have never been surpassed. "From him we can best learn that highest vitality, which is constant variability and subtlest delicacy of expression [achieved by] the greatest economy of means. A change to the minor, for example, is in Schubert an unusual musical experience," Krenek told the delegates to the Schubert Congress, who had just heard Lach claiming how slovenly the composer had been.⁷ Actually, Schubert was quite conventional in using folk music elements and eight-measure waltz melodies, and he did not extend the harmonic *resources* beyond the point reached by Haydn and Mozart. What signified his genius were the astonishing movements among those resources, the extremely daring and dramatic transitions that he made while keeping a sense of order and ultimate tonality. By studying how Schubert achieved balance without symmetry, Krenek "learned what counted, what was necessary."⁸

On his return to tonality, Krenek naturally looked to Schubert's music for guidance. He was so impressed by its freshness, by its seemingly endless variety, that he became convinced that by following Schubert's example one could recover what he chose to call the *Urerlebnis* (primordial experience) or *Ursinn* (original significance) of the musical elements of the tonal-triad system and use them to compose truly fresh and original music—even after Wagner, after Debussy, after chromaticism, atonalism, and the new twelve-tone system. He did not pore over Schubert's music looking for devices he might copy; the songs served not as some compendium of musical novelties but as a license. In what he later called the *Wiederherstellung des Ursinns* (recovery of the original purport), he would try to get himself into such a frame of mind that chords and their relations would be experienced as if for the first time, and tonality as if he had just invented it.⁹ In this way he felt the elation of one who had stumbled into a whole new world of expressive possibilities—as, indeed, for him he had. With so much that seemed new to work with he could be as daring as ever he had been during his atonal period. And he was. He so succeeded in recreating for himself the circumstances of discovery that his Neoromantic songs have the same freshness, unexpectedness, and exuberance one finds in the best of Schubert's songs. One has only to accept their terms without bothering about when they were written, whether they are contemporary or not (just as one accepts the terms of any good music of other periods and does not ask if it is contemporary with its times), and at once one perceives the imaginative power and originality with which, under those terms, means that were supposed to be worn out are manipulated—wrenched, juxtaposed, stretched, compressed, turned back on themselves—as in Schubert's own startling handling of them.

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During the Easter weekend of 1924, Krenek was taken by Werner Reinhart to call on Rainer Maria Rilke at his home, the Château de Muzot, which Reinhart had

purchased for him. It was situated on the outskirts of Sierre, a little town in the lovely district of Wallis (or Valais) that looked southward toward the most magnificent of the Swiss Alps. At forty-eight, Rilke was twice Krenek's age, yet to Krenek he seemed much older, as if his personality had taken on qualities of the ancient castle in which he lived. Nevertheless, a strong sympathy was felt on both sides, and Rilke honored his young guest by reading his *Duino Elegies* and commented on them. The following September Krenek returned to Sierre and spent long, lazy afternoons and evenings in conversation with Rilke in the arbor of the château or on the terrace of the Grand Hôtel Bellevue. One afternoon the talk turned to setting Rilke's poetry to music. Rilke was decidedly against the idea, which did not surprise Krenek, for he felt that Rilke's lines were so saturated with a rich tonality as to meet music halfway. Thus he was surprised when in November 1925, after he had settled in Kassel, he received an envelope that had been prepared with great care and found within it the manuscript of a verse trilogy entitled *O Lacrymosa*, which Rilke had written for him shortly after their talks the previous fall and now wanted him to set to music. "You know," Rilke wrote, "how all the attempts to take my verse unawares with music were disagreeable to me, as an unsolicited intrusion upon one. . . . It has seldom happened that I have written lines which appear to me suited to or in need of the musical element." In this case he had seen at once that the trilogy "originated *for* music . . . and next came the wish that sometime (sooner or later) it should be your music." Krenek thought this both an honor and a great responsibility, and he took a long time to compose the music, which he completed during the following summer after finishing *Jonny*. He decided to greet Rilke on his birthday, which fell on December 4, with a telegram announcing that the music was done. On December 15 he received a penciled note from Rilke saying that the poet was very ill and in great pain but took comfort from Krenek's news. He died a few days later. Reinhart told Krenek that the note had been his last written expression.¹⁰

In long, irregular, unrhymed, cadenced lines that in the third section are extended so far that they become simply lyrical prose, Rilke brooded on melancholy, the transitoriness of all things, and the continuum of death and rebirth:

Oh Thränenvolle, die, verhaltner Himmel über der Landschaft ihres Schmerzes schwer wird.

Und wenn sie weint, so weht ein weicher Schauer schräglichen Regens zu des Herzens Sandschicht. . . .

Nichts als ein Athemzug ist das Leere, und jenes grüne Gefülltsein der schönen Bäume:
Ein Athemzug. . . .

Oh, diese heimliche Einkehr der Erde. . . .

Wo das Erdenken geschickt unter der Starre, wo das von den grossen Sommern abgetragene Grün wieder zum neuen Einfall wird uns, zum Spiegel des Vorgefühls.

Wo die Farbe der Blumen jenes Verweilen unserer Augen vergisst.

Oh one filled with tears, who becomes heavy like the overcast sky above the landscape
of her sorrow,

So that as she weeps a soft shower of slanting rain sweeps across the sandy layer of the
heart. . . .

The emptiness is nothing but a breath, and the green fullness of the beautiful trees: a
breath. . . .

Oh, this secret inward turning of the earth. . . .

Where under the rigidity new thinking moves, where the green laid down by the great
summers becomes new inspiration and mirror of anticipation,

Where the color of the flowers forgets the lingering of our eyes.

The verse is carefully nonspecific and avoids all hints of narrative, for it is intended simply to invoke a mood, an atmosphere, by accumulating images that are blurred along their edges. Perhaps Rilke supposed that this quality was what made the trilogy appropriate for music. In any event, in setting these lines to music for high voice and piano, Krenek paid close attention to the text and carefully emphasized meanings and points of division—as, for example, when he gave particular prominence to certain phrases by setting them for voice alone in a manner suggestive of recitative.

O Lacrymosa contains some of Krenek's most lovely and appealing music and shows again how great was his lyric gift; in general he succeeded in matching the effect of his music to the nebulous impressionism of Rilke's poetry. The melodic lines are long and irregular, as befits the text, yet the phrasing is natural and well suited to the syntax of the words and the constraints of the voice. While some of the intervals are wide, they do not seem jagged or harsh, and the overall effect is one of curvilinear fluidity and motion, and in this regard words and music are complementary. The music begins with and makes many returns to pronounced tonality, reinforced by strong and repeated rhythmical patterns. Thus a firm, one might say Schubertian, foundation is laid down from which Krenek makes some unexpected progressions and shifts into remote keys. Although in a few places these lie so close together that the listener has difficulty retaining a sense of a tonal center and the effect is close to that of atonality, a patient analysis reveals the logic that inheres. Such near confusion lasts only a moment, for Krenek quickly recalls the opening motif and reaffirms the order and unity of the work. In fact, at the end of the third part he rounds off the trilogy by gracefully returning to the opening of the first part. Schubert's songs are recalled more by the accompaniment and its rhythmic patterns than by the melodic material, which is far distant from any resemblance with folk song of the kind dear to Krenek's exemplar. On the whole, the music is delectable. If it has a fault, and it is certainly a minor one, it is that at points the music seems a trifle too energetic, too dramatic, for the muted melancholy of the words. It calls just a little too much attention to itself.

Far more conspicuously Schubertian (though in many places just as conspicuously not so) is the cycle of twenty songs entitled *Reisebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen* (Travelbook from the Austrian Alps, op. 62) that Krenek wrote in three weeks ending on July 26, 1929. Making this prodigious feat even more remarkable is the fact that Krenek provided his own text from notes he had made while journeying through western Austria the previous month. With his antipathy for urban modernism and his boyhood love of mountains, Krenek rejoiced in discovering what he took for the old, unchanged, simple, and humane life of ancient Austria, and immediately on his return to Vienna he set about celebrating it in a musical diary. Using deliberately rhythmic and lyrical prose, Krenek told how, as one of those “endowed above all with a skeptical mind so that we roam around looking for self and homeland and finally know nearly all things except the land to which we were born,” he traveled by electric train, auto, even local bus and visited a great monastery at Admont, the cemetery of a mountain village, Aussee Hallstatt, the mountains above Kaprun, where he saw a dramatic summer storm, Millstättersee and other southern lakes, and the little town of Lienz, where the municipal band played with gusto, though out of tune and a bit too fast—which was, he thought, “just as it should be,” for this was the south, where life is joyful. He paused midway to reflect, “Our lot as city dwellers is to live in days of unrest, swept along on the rush of time. But life in the mountains shows us the intangible sources of being, and any house demonstrates the blessings of remaining close to nature. Will the broken ties ever be restored to us? Who can tell us where we are going? Where?” By this time well aware of the threat to Austria of the Nazis and their Austrian sympathizers, he asked, “Must all this country’s life really be wasted over politics? . . . We have been called on to be the helpers and guiding friends of the eastern and southern nations of our [Holy Roman] Empire.” Austrians had failed the test once (an allusion to the disruption of the empire in the time of Luther), but now, “Oh brothers, chase away the bloody clown [Hitler] or it will end in tragedy and we shall perish all.”

Against this theme he set the peace and beauty of the mountains. His journey taught him how great was his longing for “a different life, for different times, man and nature in harmony,” but the hard answer comes: such wholeness is never given. He should love the world just as it is, and himself just as he is. Nevertheless, he resolves to resist: “I will go on living in the freedom of spirit that follows its own laws. I shall embrace my destiny as it comes to me and keep my longing for as long as my light is aglow.” Home again in Vienna, he concludes that the final wisdom garnered from his journey is, “I am alive, and know not how long. I must die, and know not when. I walk, and know not whither—yet I do not wonder at all that I find joy in life.” The song cycle affirmed Krenek’s longing for a simple, slower-paced life, his love of his homeland and its ancient customs and traditions, and his desire to keep far from the “macabre tumult” of cities other than Vienna, which still retained some ties with the land and its past.

The influence of Schubert is at once apparent in the opening of the first song, "Motiv," where the melodic line and piano accompaniment so closely resemble the strongest idiosyncracies in Schubert's lieder that one not knowing this song was Krenek's could suppose for a moment that it was some newly discovered work by his great predecessor. But the second song, "Verkehr" (Travel), dispels any such illusion with its startling dissonances and measures of virtual polytonality; and by the fourth, "Wetter" (Weather), Krenek has moved beyond the comparative simplicities of his opening into sophisticated enharmonic shifts and queer sidewise movements away from the melodic line. Such effects are facilitated by the loose structures, which follow the meanderings of the pulsating prose. Motifs are repeated, transposed, varied rhythmically, broken into fragments—but according to no recognizable plan, so that the music has a conversational quality well suited to the tenor of the text. Indeed, Krenek was especially effective in matching his music to his words—a good deal more so than with portions of Rilke's text. Thus, for example, the music is most proselike in the eleventh song, "Alpenbewohner" (Alpine dwellers), which describes the rushing about of tourists determined not to miss anything while actually seeing nothing, and in the twelfth, "Politik," an exhortation to Krenek's countrymen to disown the "macabre circus" of National Socialism; but the form is more nearly closed and the melody more lyrical in the fourteenth and fifteenth songs, "Heimweh" (Homesickness) and "Heisser Tag am See" (Hot day at the lake), which, with the first, are closest to Schubert. "Heimweh" is especially Neoromantic, lovely, and affecting. Altogether these greatly varied, immensely subtle, and ever-eloquent songs would, just by themselves, give Krenek a place among the foremost composers of songs of this century. Yet in songs to come he surpassed their beauty and expressiveness and established himself at the very pinnacle, with no other composer of songs even approaching him.

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Back in the spring of 1927, when he was living in Kassel and working on his one-act operas, Krenek considered composing a full-scale opera about the wanderings of Orestes and his finding his lost sister, Iphigenia. He was intrigued by the possibility of a comic treatment that might involve travel through time and space to modern America, where all would end happily. Then the following summer, while he was staying at Fontromeu in the eastern Pyrenees, he came upon a local legend about a mysterious magus-monk who saved a country by curing its sick king. This, too, might do for a long work. Although on further reflection he decided that he could not turn it into an opera and went back to thinking about Orestes, he was struck by the fact that both stories contained elements of wonder and the inexplicable.

No more came of the matter until the following summer when, while honeymooning with his new wife at High Tatra in the mountains of Czechoslovakia, he

started sketching possible scenes. He had abandoned the notion of an American ending, which now bored him, substituting for it a journey to some warm and genial clime. In place of travel through time and space he would treat the material so as to make it relevant to all times and all places. He wanted to avoid a lifeless philosophical curiosity, for he was less interested in what the story of Orestes meant to the Greeks than in what the ancient tale revealed about the life and spirit of all humankind. He wanted to approach this idea not by way of classical symbolism but directly through vivid, passionate details that evoked what he termed "the feel of an abundantly flourishing, tumultuous, piquant, proliferating meridional life under the sun of the south."¹¹ Such were the qualities that he attributed to southern Greece in the novel about Alkibiades he had planned during his teens, and that fascinated him in the reports about California and, in some obscure fashion, figured in Jonny's New York, the abode of carefree hedonism. And although he had abandoned the legend of the magus, he retained an interest in miraculous interventions.

So it was that from these notions, from portions of the ancient story as dramatized by Euripides, and from episodes he himself invented, he fashioned in the summer of 1928 an immense five-act libretto. By December he was well along with the music, and the following May *Leben des Orest* (The life of Orestes, op. 60) was complete. Shortly thereafter he made the journey of *Reisebuch*, and it is far from chance that in the fifteenth song Krenek wrote: "Here the spirit of the south reigns. . . . There is grace that begins to spread its wings of gladness over our lives"; in the sixteenth song: "We are in the south, where life again is a thing of joy"; and in the seventeenth: "Over the mountains lies the southland, where sun, moon, and stars are bright and clear in the heavens, while here the clouds are still with us. I sense from afar the Italian light, life, and contentment, floating at ease and peace, with grace from the sky and earth. . . . How I wish this blessed land had been my native home!"

In Krenek's version, Agamemnon, obsessed with military glory and teetering on the edge of madness, prepares to drag the men of his nation off to war. Aegisthos, taking advantage of Agamemnon's monomania and his jealousy toward his son, Orestes, suggests that he sacrifice the latter to ensure victory. Klytemnestra learns of this plan and sends Orestes away, while Agamemnon, in a frenzy, makes ready to behead his daughter Iphigenia. The gods intervene and snatch her away, whereupon Agamemnon sets sail for Troy.

At this point Krenek brought in two characters of his own invention: Thoas, a widowed magician who reluctantly rules over a cold and desolate region called simply Northland, and his daughter Tamar. Thoas, who yearns for a distant country where, according to travelers, the ocean plays around shining mountains, colors and fragrance suffuse the sunny air, and "those who live there in happiness, free of dread, accept their lives as a gift from heaven for enjoyment," prays for the coming of a maiden who brings such ways with her. Iphigenia appears, and he at once falls

in love with her, which enrages Thamar. Meanwhile, Orestes, who has found his way to Athens, comes upon a street fair, gets into a fight, and is arrested. Seeking divine intervention for him, his old nurse, who has accompanied him on his wanderings, offers a white ball he has been playing with to a statue of Athene.

Krenek then returned to the old story, but modified it to fit the ending he had in mind. Agamemnon, broken in spirit and disillusioned with glory, returns and is met by his daughter Elektra, who keeps him from suicide and tells him of Klytemnestra's infidelity with Aegisthos. Aegisthos hands a chalice of poisoned wine to Agamemnon, who, suspecting what it is, would willingly drink it. Elektra takes it from him, but he recovers it, drinks, and dies, whereupon Elektra is accused of poisoning him. Orestes, now a wanderer without hope, has started back, thinking that by now he is safe from his father. He arrives during Agamemnon's funeral. As the rites turn into a drunken orgy, Elektra tells him what has happened. He kills Aegisthos and Klytemnestra and flees. The crowd tears Elektra to pieces.

Ten years have passed since Iphigenia arrived in Northland. Thoas has wooed her without success and now in despair wants to give up his throne and retire from life, like the king in *The Secret Kingdom*. Orestes enters and Thamar immediately falls in love with him. Burdened with guilt, he believes he cannot love her, though he might be able to purify himself by washing in blood. Iphigenia appears, and Orestes prepares to kill her. Suddenly they recognize one another and embrace, just as Thoas and Thamar enter. After explanations, the four decide to leave for the south, for Iphigenia admits that she has at last come to love Thoas.

When they reach Athens, Orestes is told that he must stand trial for killing his mother. After admitting his guilt he puts himself at the mercy of the court. Using black and white balls as ballots, the jurors vote on his fate but reach a tie. (In the old legend, Orestes was judged to have done a necessary evil and to have atoned through suffering.) At this point a little girl finds the white ball that Orestes' nurse had offered to Athene and accidentally drops it into the bowl with the other balls. The judge concludes that Athene has intervened on behalf of Orestes and frees him amid general rejoicing. The old nurse appears and recounts how she had offered the ball to Athene years earlier, whereupon the principals unite in singing, "We feel that grace has come to us at last." Thoas says he will enjoy the golden days with Iphigenia. Orestes says that he has found salvation and is told, "Grace is yours, not justice. . . . Keep it forever and stay with us." He replies, "I wandered through the darkest vale, but light of grace has brought me home. Praise be given to the powers that bestowed the grace." A chorus of Athenians picks up and repeats these valedictory words, and so the opera ends.

"Man," Krenek explained in a commentary on the opera, "in the most varied form and character—as he lives, sorrows, loves, is driven by passion, is restrained by knowledge, as here he sinks irretrievably to the depths, there is exalted by incomprehensible grace—this man is the theme of the piece." Emphasizing the element of

wonder, which he called “the beneficial and hopeful element of the human spirit,” Krenek maintained that “belief in mystery and grace, disdained and shameful at present, may be revived.” Orestes’ guilt was the consequence of an “unrestrained life force, which could not be governed or subdued by human laws but only redeemed by . . . the irrational and arbitrary force of grace.” Another manifestation of mysterious power was the transformation of Thoas’s desired maiden from a spirit into a real being; this, Krenek said, owed much to his reading of Kierkegaard’s *Furcht und Zittern* (Fear and trembling), with its “magnificent analysis” of the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. Here, as in *Jonny*, Krenek meant to treat seriously a serious theme, in this case the possibility of grace, in the midst of what turned out to be, as in the music of the conclusion, tumultuous entertainment.¹²

He regarded his version of the story as a parable for the present. Antiquity could serve as a “showplace” because in the Ur-myths of humankind one can find the concerns of all times; in them, “as in an embryo,” all artistic human possibilities are latent. He sought not some historically accurate, Hellenistic rendition but one that emphasized the North-South contrast on which many of the meanings of the opera depended. Thus he would offer not archeological curiosities but “people of our own time who express their being and essence in the loosely depicted milieu of the timeless greatness of an eternal fable.” Even the concept of grace had contemporary relevance. “It seems to me,” Krenek said, “that just when opera in so many places surrenders with an angry grimace of gallows humor to the desolate rationalism of an era undermined and toppled by technology and profiteering, it is essential to point to other values. It would be well [for us] to become somewhat more humble, modest, and credulous. . . . For happiness comes not from rationalism but from contemplation, belief, hope.”¹³

This was grand opera in the great tradition, according to which, as Krenek put it, “Everything should be brilliant and pleasing, corresponding to the monumentality and significance of the theme.”¹⁴ As Andrew Porter later pointed out, “By [his] ingenious libretto, Krenek insured plenty of action: two near sacrifices, three murders, and two tremendous recognition scenes.”¹⁵ The music was certainly equal to these occasions in immensity, force, and invention. In all, *Orest* was the major achievement of Krenek’s Neoromantic period, surpassing in all respects the so much more famous *Jonny*. Attempting to suggest the range of the music, Martin Bernheimer observed:

The key to its style is an inspired, miraculously unified eclecticism. “Orestes” . . . is a wonderful piece: an opera in which the melodies fascinate because they never reach their expected destinations, a tragedy that would rather chuckle than weep, a collage that makes as much of a banjo burp as a trumpet roar, a drama that seeks cornball simplicity one moment, eternal profundity the next, and finds both. . . . Despite occasional lapses in discipline and focus, it remains a work of brazen originality.¹⁶

The music undergoes strange inversions, extensions, and progressions, yet a strong impression of tonality is never lost, a quality that, together with the grandeur and sonorous flow of the orchestration, brings to mind the operas of Puccini and Richard Strauss. Schubert's influence can be seen in the lovely, simple shepherd's song that Orestes hears during his wanderings and in the soliloquy that surrounds this song. Most daring, though no longer a novelty, was Krenek's use of jazzlike materials to underline the absurdity—and modernity—of Agamemnon's obsession with military glory. While limning Agamemnon, Krenek once again had spurred and booted Mussolini in mind, and he hoped that the audience would see the resemblance. To call attention to the loutishness of Fascism, he set an orgy around Agamemnon's bier to jazz rhythms. At the end, when extolling grace, he undercut the solemnity of the moment, which was too much like the gloom of Thoas's chilly domain, by giving the sun-warmed, pleasure-loving Athenians music akin to popular dance melodies. As Bernheimer noted, just when the listener sits back expecting to wallow in recollections of nineteenth-century bombast, he is jolted with cheeky twentieth-century anachronisms. Here, certainly, Krenek's latent comic spirit gleefully, if momentarily, reappeared.*

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On December 17, 1928, months before *Orest* was finished, Gustav Brecher wrote to Krenek saying that Hertzka had told him a new opera was under way. He gathered, since he had not heard from Krenek, that Leipzig was not being considered for its premiere, but he would like to have a go at it because his enemies were calling him a reactionary and Straussian, and he would like to show his true mettle. In fact Krenek and Hertzka had been looking to Berlin or Vienna, but Brecher evidently touched the right persuasive note when in May, after seeing the libretto, he wrote to praise its contemporary relevance, adding, "Only you could write such a text, which offers at the same time such rich musical opportunities."¹⁷ Soon an agreement for staging the premiere in Leipzig was effected—to the great disappointment of Paul Bekker, who wrote angrily in protest at Krenek's not having offered it first to Wiesbaden. Krenek tried to soothe him, but his excuses were less than straightforward, and Bekker replied coldly that he regarded the matter as a breach of friendship and bad professional behavior and Krenek's explanation as devious and self-serving. If Krenek had had reasons for not wanting a premiere in Wiesbaden, Bekker could accept this, but not Krenek's going out of his way to avoid saying anything about the arrangements with Leipzig until the matter was settled.¹⁸ The tone of the letter made it clear that Bekker intended to make a final break. Krenek, who was on a brief

*The anachronism was taken further—to the point almost of self-ridicule—by Ghita Hager, who for a production in 1975 had cartons of Colonel Sanders Kentucky Fried Chicken brought on at the end as the Athenians settled down for a family-style, finger-lickin' picnic. Krenek was shocked, but later agreed that this treatment was not out of keeping with his overall intention (Krenek, interviews with the author, Palm Springs, March 17, 1972; and Portland, Oregon, November 21, 1975).

vacation in North Africa and did not receive the letter until his return, sent Bekker a postcard from Tunis, but thereafter all correspondence and personal relations between them ceased. In November 1932, Bekker published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* an open letter on the state of modern music, and Krenek replied shortly afterward in the same paper. From the wording of this exchange they might as well have been total strangers. They never met again.

After long and meticulous preparation, *Onst*'s premiere took place in the Leipzig State Theater on January 19, 1930. It was preceded the same afternoon by the premiere of *Reisebuch*, which was well received. Brecher conducted the opera; Walther Brüggemann, who staged the premiere of *Jonny* so spectacularly, was again the artistic director; and Oskar Strnad, a member of the Schönberg circle in Vienna, designed the sets. The opera was an immediate hit with the audience, but critics were of two minds. Virtually all of them conceded Krenek's cleverness and his instinct for sensational stage effects, but many were suspicious of his motives. Heinrich Wiegand, writing in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, saw a resemblance between Orestes and Schwanda the Bagpiper, the protagonist of a hugely successful, eminently silly opera of the same name by Jaromir Weinberger, but admitted that Krenek was the most gifted man of the theater in the past decade. Viktor Zuckerhandl, critic for the *Wiener Neue Freie Presse*, thought that the music was all second-hand: a scene between Orestes and Thamar recalled a duet in *The Flying Dutchman*; the recognition duet between Iphigenia and Orestes recalled such a duet between Leonore and Florestan in *Fidelio*; the ensemble when the principals are about to quit Northland for Greece reminded one of Gluck; Orestes' appeal to the judge resembled an aria by Verdi; and so on. After adding references to Strauss, Schubert, Puccini, Lehár, and even Hindemith, Zuckerhandl said that the music showed how little soul had inspired the work.

Adolf Aber, a scholar who had left the Institute of Musicology at Berlin University to become critic for the *Leipziger Neuesten Nachrichten*, was one of the few who seemed to understand what Krenek was trying to bring off. Perceiving that for Krenek music had a suggestive function, he was able to grasp the intention of Krenek's use of banality and harshness to emphasize the brutality of the masses, especially during the orgy at Agamemnon's funeral. Krenek, he said, "does not write one note for his principal roles that is not securely based in the dramatic events. . . . The music gives the work as a whole a definitive and firm form, investing the whole with the nobility of genuine art." Virtually alone, he admired the serious aspect of the work, which by its depth and profundity, he said, looked back not to the grand opera of Meyerbeer but to the musical drama of Wagner. Wiegand, too, had been reminded of Wagner by the redemption theme, but thought that the problem of grace was no more than a concession to the happy ending. Zuckerhandl maintained that Krenek had resorted to "hollow-sounding philosophical asides" to elevate the work.

The argument was resumed when *Orest* opened a few weeks later in Berlin at the State Opera House, with Otto Klemperer conducting and sets by Giorgio de Chirico. Although the *Frankfurter Zeitung* reviewer who had covered the premiere seemed to Krenek to have taken his meanings seriously, Bernard Diebold, who covered the Berlin production for the paper, rebuked him for attempting to treat ideas seriously in grand opera and introducing the theme of grace, adding that in using mythic materials Krenek was under Wagner's shadow.* In a reply published in the paper on March 22, 1930, Krenek pleaded guilty to bringing in serious ideas but insisted that he was not following Wagner. Any supposed resemblances between *Orest* and *The Ring* were superficial and misleading, for Krenek's conception of redemption was based on an entirely different set of assumptions. But the audiences probably did not care any more about such matters than they had cared about the serious side of *Jonny*, for *Orest*, as Andrew Porter said later, was a "huge, dashing, brilliant grand opera . . . arresting, entertaining, frankly and fluently melodious, very theatrical, and powerful," and that was enough.¹⁹ Consequently, even though the brief period of economic stability had ended in Germany and opera house directors were increasingly hesitant to stage new works, productions soon followed elsewhere. Krenek had for the moment no reason to suppose that he could not maintain from his refuge in Vienna his eminence in the opera world and his hold on the hearts of the public.

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While he was finishing *Orest* Krenek entered into a casual exchange of views with his old acquaintance Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, which in the end would be a factor in his adopting a musical idiom that entirely altered the tenor and direction of his life and work. The two had met, as noted earlier, at rehearsals of *Sprung über den Schatten* in Frankfurt during June 1924. Prior to this event Adorno had attended the premiere of Krenek's Second Symphony, which he henceforth regarded as one of the most profound musical experiences of his life. Thus Krenek was already something of a hero to him when they met; as he watched rehearsals of *Sprung*, however, he made jibing remarks that offended the composer. Krenek thought Adorno pompous and presumptuous, but he was impressed with his intellectual powers. In the autumn of 1928 they met again at the Schubert Congress. Adorno admired Krenek's defense of Schubert, and, drawn together by this shared opinion and by their admiration of Karl Kraus and Berg, with whom Adorno had studied composition, they were soon on cordial terms.

*Neither Diebold nor other critics, whether positive or negative, mentioned *political* ideas latent in the opera, even though several recognized Krenek's effort to draw parallels between ancient and modern times. Adolf Aber came nearest in his comment on the treatment of the masses. Today the implied disparaging of Fascism and Nazism in the representation of Agamemnon and his followers seems apparent. If they did not overlook the political ideas, the critics may have suppressed mention of them for fear of inflaming the street bullies.

As their friendship grew, Krenek found Adorno charming. He came from a musical background. His father, a German Jew, was a patron of the arts, while his mother, a Corsican, had had a modest but successful career as a concert singer, during part of which Adorno had been her accompanist. Although he had written songs that Krenek thought excellent, his considerable gift for composition was repressed by harsh self-criticism. He had been deeply hurt by exclusion from the Schönberg circle even though he had studied with Berg, and this troubled him throughout his life and undermined his confidence in his music. Yet it was his musical intelligence that in fact caused the exclusion. Schönberg distrusted his penetration, thought him much too clever, perceived him as a rival authority (something intolerable), and refused to have anything to do with him, even though it was well known that Adorno admired Schönberg above all modern composers. At the time of the ripening friendship with Krenek, Adorno had but recently joined the newly formed Institute for Social Research, a Marxist study center founded by Max Horkheimer that was privately endowed but affiliated with the University of Frankfurt. A fastidious aristocrat in tastes and intellectual style, Adorno used Hegelian dialectic to gain insights into music that excited Krenek, even if he rejected some of the assumptions on which they were based.

At the close of 1928 Krenek and Adorno were appointed to the board of directors of *Anbruch*. Adorno also served as an associate editor under Paul Stefan, and Krenek frequently helped with editorial chores. With such leadership the magazine became for a time insistently polemical and confrontational on behalf of progressive music, but soon Universal Edition, which published the journal as a house organ intended to advance the careers of its composers, insisted on a more ingratiating manner, particularly in the face of a growing reaction against the avant-garde. The sharper tone that they had introduced owed in part to their increasing concern over the alienation of the modern composer.

They were not alone in this feeling of concern. There had been intense discussion of the problem at the Baden-Baden music festival of 1927, and in 1928 Hindemith and others who wanted to reach the ordinary person through music playable by students and amateurs had founded the journal *Gemeinschaftsmusik für Jugend und Haus* (Social music for young people and the home). Lay "music for use" (*Gebrauchsmusik*) and folksy school music (*Lehrstücke*) disgusted Krenek and Adorno, and a few years later Krenek summed up his own view of music for schoolchildren, which had become a preoccupation with some hitherto serious composers, in a review he wrote of a collection of essays edited by Hans Joachim Moser, the director of an academy for church and school music in Berlin. The essays envisioned a return to the supposed condition of the Middle Ages, when a homogenous folk had had a simple culture in which all took part in making music. Unspoiled children, it was claimed, could recover that happy state through their natural instincts and melodic gifts. Noting in passing that there was not enough time for such activity in the

school day, Krenek argued the foolishness of attributing musical talent to primitive folk simply because they were primitive. Besides, he wrote, to make music this way one would have to change the bases of the entire modern way of life, something few would be ready to do. The making of music should be left to the highly trained, while children and amateurs should be schooled to appreciate it.²⁰

Krenek perceived the alienation of the composer as largely a matter of the public's inability to recognize quality, and the way to deal with the problem was certainly not to compromise merit with juvenility. For Adorno, however, the issue was far more complex. He believed that, as he put it in a letter to Krenek in 1934, "music can be socially organized throughout and [be] of true or false consciousness ('asocial' music does not exist . . .) and still lack an audience; that is to say, it expresses structurally the condition of a class, its contradictions, and so forth in its inherent technical devices without being understood precisely by the class with which it is associated."²¹ This being so, Adorno believed that he should be able to "decode" musical works and make them reveal history, reveal the "latent society" concretized within the works; and his close examination of scores, particularly those of Beethoven, resulted in interpretations that Krenek found awesome. He explained the neglect of the atonal and twelve-tone music of Schönberg, Berg, and Webern, the music that he cherished above all other, by saying that it was a reaction against the corruption of the arts by capitalism, which treated them as commodities. As such it reflected the times and the composers' alienation as a part of those times and thus was "socially organized throughout." Being both historically significant and beautiful, this music should be preserved for the future when it would be understood and appreciated—though Adorno was unclear as to how the alienation would be overcome and such a happy state brought to pass.

This was all very well, but it could not account for the music of his friend. It was easy enough for Adorno to maintain that Stravinsky was a clever trifler who resisted the impact of social forces on musical materials by turning his back on the times; his Neoclassicism, Adorno argued, provided marketable wares that appealed to the bourgeoisie by adding a false glitter to stale matter that required of the listener neither understanding nor effort.²² But what was he to make of Krenek's *Urerlebnis*, *Ursim*, and Neoromanticism? Such music, he confessed in a radio talk, defied all categories.²³ Yet it had undeniable authority and excellence that had to be acknowledged. "Today, as in the time of your Second Symphony," he told Krenek in 1932, "you are for me the most puzzling of all composers, one whom I cannot bring to a formula."²⁴

"Why bother?" Krenek might have asked. He himself believed that systems come and systems go; since none is inherent in the material, composers select whatever system is needed to solve the problems presented by their expressive aims. Nevertheless, there are determining elements in the material, and if composers are to have the freedom essential for the complete development of the work in hand, they must earn

it by mastering the elements. Technique is that mastery, that means to freedom. Properly used, it makes possible a work so integrated that every element has a recognizable function: the stratagems used to realize a composer's expressive aim organize the material according to a reference system that makes the music intelligible. But *no* such system enjoys a priority, and composers may and should, if the need arises, avail themselves of older modes.²⁵ In short, as long as he avoided clichés and wrote fresh, well-integrated music, Krenek saw no reason why he should not employ whatever means he pleased, and he acknowledged no obligation to use only the most recently developed systems as a response to contemporary social forces. For him the creative spirit was decisive. Composers had as their business to make the best music they could, which was then to be understood in terms of its inherent nature.

Thus as their friendship progressed, a clear line was drawn between them. As a Hegelian-Marxist sociologist, Adorno wanted to know how music embodied the social history of its time. As a composer, Krenek wanted to defend the creator's freedom to meet personal standards of excellence. Both relished a debate, and they were soon drawn into an exchange of views conducted in conversations, when Krenek came to Frankfurt, as for many reasons he often did; in letters; in a radio debate; and, because the journal needed material, in the pages of *Anbruch*. What is striking throughout is the ethical bias of the discussion, the emphasis each placed on the *responsibility* of the composer—for Adorno, responsibility to be true to the conditions of the times, even if this meant loneliness and neglect; for Krenek, responsibility to be true to personal standards of artistic merit, even if this meant loneliness and neglect, though it did not always have to, for excellence was possible in music that the public enjoyed.

The debate got under way sometime early in 1929 when Adorno sent an essay, "Atonales Intermezzo?" to Krenek for comment.²⁶ In it Adorno made reference to the twelve-tone technique, which led Krenek to ask, "Wherein does the twelve-tone system commend itself as a higher form of thought?" Adorno saw in the question an opportunity to test his theories against the daily experience of composing. The system presumed, he wrote, that the composer has a free choice, but in fact that was not so. Tonality was in ruins and its decay irreversible, for one cannot recover its original meanings. (At this very moment Krenek was endeavoring to do just that in *Leben des Orest*, and in a few months he would compose *Reisebuch*.) In the twelve-tone system all the elements of music except tonality remain; the system was simply a fresh means of clarifying the material.²⁷

At this point the friends, who were ever on the lookout for copy to be published in *Anbruch*, realized that they could turn this discussion into a pair of essays, which they proceeded to write and to publish in the issue for June 1929. Adorno opened his essay, "Reaktion und Fortschritt" (Reaction and progress), with the dictum that

the meaning of musical material is changed by social forces and composers must submit to this condition. Paradoxically, composers lose their freedom when they resist the requirements of the material, including the changes, for then they no longer enjoy the stimulus of new conditions or the opportunity to achieve full integration of a work, which is possible only when all the demands of the material at the most advanced stage of its dialectic are satisfied. That is, there are meanings inescapably present in the material that, if a composer refuses to acknowledge and use them, disrupt the unity and mar the excellence of a composition. "Progress" in music does not mean that modern composers should be able to produce works better than Beethoven's but only that the material has been altered since Beethoven's day. Composers should not worry about whether or not the forms they use are appropriate to the times but instead should take advantage of material in its most contemporary—that is, its most authentic—condition. Then the appropriateness of the form will take care of itself. An effort at restoration such as Neoclassicism becomes mere stylization: since the original meaning and force of the material cannot be brought back, style commands the primary attention.²⁸

Krenek's reply, "Fortschritt und Reaktion" (Progress and reaction), defended his own current practice. It is, he wrote, an article of faith, not something proven, that progressiveness in music is determined by congruity with the presumed historical condition of the material. How can we know if Pergolesi was progressive? He might actually have been timid about using new developments. All that we can be certain of is that he was a genius in treating familiar conventions in uniquely personal ways. Contrarily, reaction is supposed to be signified today by a return to tonality, but one goes back to tonality because it produces the greatest constructive simplicity and consequent coherence. The tonic-dominant relationship can be used to bind remote elements and, if there is a sure center, can produce great tension and expressiveness. For the latter, tonality is still the best resource we have. Spiritual energy and personal creative vision can overcome exhaustion and banality in the materials; this is illustrated by how slowly change took place in the past and by the fact that all the chords to be found in the works of Beethoven and Schubert are conceivable in the works of Bach and even earlier composers.²⁹

There, for the moment, the debaters rested, but in the meantime Adorno had become deeply disturbed by what he saw as an attempt by Universal Edition to reduce *Anbruch* to a propaganda sheet for the enhancement of sales, thereby treating music in just the way—as a commodity—that speeded the decay of materials and the alienation of composers. Consequently, he resigned from the staff. In a letter to Krenek on October 8, 1930, he explained his action and expressed his gratitude for Krenek's support. He especially appreciated their intellectual solidarity in taking pains over the things they deemed important. He felt that Krenek had helped him because fidelity to the issues counted more for Krenek than the differences in their

views. But not even these issues mattered as much to him as Krenek himself. "The human experience, signified by your conduct, remains for me the greatest benefit of the *Anbruch* period in general."³⁰

Adorno continued to be troubled, he told Krenek later, by his inability to fit his friend into a "materials category," and in a talk he prepared for a program of Krenek's songs broadcast from Frankfurt on November 26, 1931, he tried another tack. Recalling the cataclysmic impression the Second Symphony made on him, he said that Krenek's affinity for this kind of holocaustic vision set him apart from the mainstream of musical history, taking him out of the ranks of those whose progressiveness or lack of it could be accounted for in terms of their relation to the historical situation of music. Krenek's regression could be explained by psychoanalytic theory: his atonal works, such as the symphony, were taking him in the direction of terrifying dreams, and wakefulness had to assert control and banish the dreams by means of familiar forms that seemed natural and reassuring. In Krenek's most recent songs, the *Krauslieder* of 1931 (discussed in chapter 6), the extremes of dreams and wakefulness came together: the dream was retrieved and dealt with during wakeful moments.³¹

Krenek was pleased by Adorno's expressions of admiration in his talk but puzzled by this explanation of his uniqueness. For one thing, nearly three years had now elapsed since he composed *Reisebuch*, and such changes had taken place in his way of composing that he had come now to think that art has no unequivocal solutions; there is always something that is metalogical and cannot be accounted for even in hindsight. This was not to say, he told Adorno, that a residue of unassimilated material is inevitable, for a work can contain irrational, inexplicable portions and still be a true organism. In saying this, Krenek put himself, at least for the moment, at a far remove from his long-held conviction, taken from Kurth and Erdmann, that every note in a composition should be explicable. Yet Adorno, too, had changed his position, for in reply he admitted that while the relation of music to society merited the most serious study, music's value *as music* is immanent in its organization and is not dependent on how much or how little it functions in society or how accurately it reflects and deals with the antinomies of modern life.³²

In the aftermath, as will be seen, Krenek was to move in the direction that Adorno in his earlier phase had deemed progressive, and he was to develop such a concern over political events in Germany and Austria that in a lecture entitled "The Freedom of the Human Spirit" delivered at Mannheim on November 17, 1931, he took the step, extraordinary for him, of saying that politically neutral art was not possible. Yet there remained even thereafter much that was incalculable in his music, as Adorno acknowledged in his last attempt, published a quarter-century later, to account for his friend's music. In "Zur Physiognomie Kreneks" (Krenek's physiognomy) he remarked, after citing yet again the Second Symphony and comparing its premiere with that of *The Rite of Spring*, that there was always something wild,

meaningless, uncontrolled, and shocking in Krenek's music, and it was this aspect of his physiognomy that caused him to attempt to renovate Romanticism. Adorno seemed to be agreeing with Krenek about inexplicable elements, but there is a great deal of difference between calling music meaningless and uncontrolled and saying that it may contain metalogical elements and still be an organism. In fact Adorno was, in effect, admitting failure: Krenek's music and the forces that made it what it was eluded him to the end.*³³

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Much as Krenek rejected Adorno's Marxist determinism and cherished the quiet of his Viennese retreat, events were under way that would alter his life and music in ways unimaginable when he composed *Leben des Orest*, *Reisebuch*, and a beautifully lyrical Fifth String Quartet (op. 65, 1930), events that would bring him to partial agreement with Adorno on the impact of social forces on works of art.

In Germany, while the elections of 1928 seemed to show the Nazis at their lowest point since the failure of the Beerhall Putsch in 1923, in fact the balloting was no measure of their potential strength. They had developed a well-knit party organization in Germany and had acquired many sympathizers in Austria. The prosperity that had followed the stabilizing of German currency was ending, and the economy was heading for a slump. The German people were worried and in their anxiety were becoming increasingly intolerant of innovation and change and mistrustful of intellectuals, pluralism in life-styles, and conflicting ideas. The older people spoke nostalgically of the days before the war when they had known security, stability, and seemly behavior. Many young people yearned for the sense of belonging to something palpable that would give meaning and importance to their lives. Weary of skepticism and the burdens of thought it laid upon them, they rejoiced when Heidegger told them, "Thinking is the mortal enemy of understanding." And despite the Nazis' poor showing at the polls in 1928, many Germans were gradually coming to believe not only that the Nazis had identified the persons responsible for the nation's troubles but also that they had the authority and discipline to deal with these troubles.

On October 3, 1929, as Krenek was returning from a pleasant holiday in North Africa, Gustav Stresemann, a man of international stature and the last effective leader of the German liberals, died in Berlin at the age of fifty-one. On October 29, a few days before the rehearsals for *Orest* began in Leipzig, the New York stock market collapsed, sending panic through the money centers of the world. By year's end Germany was lurching into a deep depression. In February, the Socialist cabinet resigned, and on the following day Heinrich Brüning formed a rightist cabinet, an

*In the years following his work with *Anbruch*, Adorno went on to become a social philosopher and culture critic of international importance; see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973).

event that unmistakably signified the nation's mood. Now the Nazis began their swift and terrible ascent. On June 30, the last Allied troops withdrew from the Rhineland. In September, the Nazis made such gains in the national elections that they became the second strongest party, crippling Parliament with their disruptions. As the depression worsened, their support increased, and soon they were able to force the government to lift the ban on their storm troopers. In an election held in July 1932 they emerged as the strongest party in Germany, and in consequence Hitler was made chancellor the following January. The Reichstag fire occurred on February 27, and on March 5 the Nazis took control of the government. By May they had banned all progressive art, literature, drama, and music as Jewish and bolshevist. An era of extraordinary creativity was ended.

Actually, the Golden Age of opera made possible by the support of the Weimar intellectuals had ended before the Nazis came to power. For although there had been a genuinely enthusiastic audience for new works, particularly in Berlin, the general public had had no real taste for them, especially when they dispensed with familiar forms and conventions or made fun of traditional values and figures of authority. Mainstream concertgoers had passively accepted what was offered (ironically, in part because of the authority invested in directors) while growing increasingly weary of and hostile toward avant-gardism. Many who abhorred the brutality of the Nazis agreed nonetheless with Alfred Rosenberg, the party's cultural oracle, when he said, "The time of the intellectual as an arbiter of artistic values is ended," and condoned the attitude, if not the hooliganism itself, of Nazi bullies who, for example, threw stink bombs during a performance of the Weill-Brecht *Dreigroschenoper* (Threepenny opera) at the Berlin State Opera. Know-nothingism and kitsch were on the rise, forcing managers to shuffle their calendars to make room for banal standards and gaudy operettas. The season of 1929–1930 was the last great effulgence.

In that season *Leben des Orest* opened in Leipzig and Berlin to general acclaim, probably because most audience members perceived it more as a luxuriant grand opera than as unsettling social commentary. In the spring of 1930 Schönberg's one-act *Von Heute auf Morgen* (From one day to the next) received its first performance in Frankfurt, where it was followed by Antheil's jazzy satire *Transatlantic*, a moderately successful attempt to imitate *Jonny*. *Christophe Colomb* by Milhaud and Paul Claudel, which would later have great influence on Krenek, opened during May in Berlin, followed in June by *Der Jasager* (The approver) by Weill and Brecht, and Hindemith's *Wir bauen eine Stadt* (We build a city). But signs of what was to come were not lacking. The premiere of the Weill-Brecht *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (Rise and fall of the city of Mahagonny), which took place at Leipzig not long after the opening of *Orest*, was greeted with stink bombs, and on the first night of its Frankfurt production the following October rioting broke out and a Communist student was beaten to death by Nazis. The threat of violence, the

resurgence of bourgeois tastes, and the combination of rising costs and diminishing subsidies became too much for the directors. The Kroll Opera House in Berlin, which had made a specialty of new works, closed its doors, and elsewhere directors scrambled to keep their houses open, going to any lengths to please the public. Thus by the time of the official ban in the spring of 1933, modernism had almost wholly disappeared from German opera.

But the prospects still appeared bright when, following the success of *Orest* at Leipzig, Krenk retired to the village of Dölsach in the Tirol and, on June 13, 1930, began sketching the libretto of a new opera for Brecher entitled *Kehraus um St. Stephan* (Cleaning up around St. Stephen's—referring to Stephansdom, St. Stephen's Cathedral, the principal landmark of Vienna). He chose deliberately to model his text on the comedies of the early-nineteenth-century Viennese actor and playwright Joachim Nepomuk Nestroy. Excited by hearing Karl Kraus's public readings of Nestroy, he had purchased the collected works and now set out to imitate their uproarious buffoonery, topical references, and satire on social pretentiousness and chicanery.³⁴ Working without pause except for occasional rambles in the mountains, Krenk finished the words and music of the first six scenes by the end of the month; the opera as a whole was complete by the latter part of September. He immediately sent a piano-vocal version to Brecher for consideration.

It is impossible to summarize the conglomeration of events in *Kehraus*. Following Nestroy, Krenk tried to caricature as many kinds of rogues of postwar Vienna as possible, but he was far less adroit than Nestroy in binding his elements, and the account given here, to be intelligible, can include only a portion of even the main bits. The action begins in November 1918, immediately after the establishment of the Republic of Austria and the demobilization of the Imperial Army. Othmar Brandstetter, a former cavalry officer, tries to hang himself, having become so impoverished that he cannot carry on his efforts to capture the heart of Elisabeth, Countess Torregiani. Saved by a passerby, he begins living by his wits through manipulating the black market, selling pornographic pictures, and acting as barker at a booth in the Prater, Vienna's great amusement park. Meanwhile, an industrialist whose firm is in trouble has undertaken to comfort the countess. Needing money, he takes as a partner an especially arrogant and repulsive capitalist from Berlin named Goldstein, who also develops an interest in the countess. (Obviously influenced by portraits of such capitalists in the drawings of George Grosz, Krenk borrowed the name of and used as a model the Berlin lawyer who had handled the negotiations with Universal Edition for the film rights to *Jonny*.)³⁵ Labor difficulties at the industrialist's plant are being exploited by a Hungarian confidence man who poses variously as a labor representative and as a crusading journalist. Instead of pressing his suit with the countess, the industrialist takes a mistress and sets her up with a boutique, which brings her to the attention of his Berlin partner, who immediately wants her too. For her part, the mistress wants money, "only money, much money,"

she says, for she hankers after a motorcycle, a radio, a weekend place in the country, and fancy clothes. As for fidelity, "One admirer? Two would be better. Many men." The industrialist is forced to drop out of the competition for her favors when Goldstein, taking advantage of the labor unrest, assumes control of the firm and reduces his rival to beggary. Othmar hires him to help at the Prater, where he sees his former girl friend elected Miss Vienna, still being energetically pursued by Goldstein. Utterly defeated, the industrialist shoots himself and in doing so wounds Othmar, who tried to save him. This makes a hero of Othmar and brings him to the attention of Goldstein, who offers him a job as a public relations man in Berlin. When Othmar turns down the offer, Goldstein leaves, taking Miss Vienna with him. Newsboys appear crying the latest sensation: spring has come. Reunited with the countess, Othmar proclaims a new philosophy: the revolution is over and we missed our chance, but the sun rises every day, morning always comes again, and in the evening the stars will forever appear. Therefore, he declares, his words being picked up by the countess and a chorus of newsboys and bystanders, we should live cheerfully and peacefully within a modest sphere, each responsible for oneself. Then a good society of one for all will appear of its own accord. As the sun breaks through the clouds, lighting up the cross on the peak of St. Stephen's Cathedral in the distance, Othmar advises: "Let us drink, friends. I see beckoning many days that will bring us much joy. Such is life, eternally. Eternally."

But despite this seemingly cheerful conclusion, the libretto lacks almost entirely the lightheartedness of Krenek's earlier comic operas such as *Sprung* and *Schwerge-wicht*, and the ending seems almost an afterthought, tacked on, unlike *Jonny's* ending, which is prepared for throughout the entire preceding action. To the degree that the events of *Kehraus* perhaps do prepare for this ending, it is in the sense that here is one last bit of satire on the Viennese for their sentimentality and self-deceiving gaiety. Certainly the libretto is incoherent because Krenek packed it with characters not for the sake of the action but to satirize as many familiar types of the period as possible: former officers with their dreams of uniforms and cavalry charges, laborers, union organizers, policemen, journalists, monarchists, revolutionaries, liberals, businessmen, Hungarian freebooters, civic boosters, girls of easy virtue, highborn ladies who accepted the overtures of rich middle-class upstarts—just about all the obvious targets except, oddly enough, civil service officials and in-office politicians. Some of the characters resembled those of earlier operas: Othmar was a cousin of sorts to the poet Goldhaar of *Sprung*; Miss Vienna was a harsher version of the pert soubrettes of *Sprung* and *Jonny*; and both the Hungarian labor leader-journalist and a busybody named von Keresztely resembled the spiritualist, Dr. Berg, in *Sprung*. Written in doggerel rhymes and colloquial prose filled with wordplay after the example of Nestroy, the libretto rambled from scene to scene with no clear-cut story line and with much need of condensation, especially in the last third. Perhaps the love affair of Othmar and Elisabeth was meant to be the

central element. At least it provided a frame for beginning and ending the work, but little else.*

Although Krenek had taken Nestroy for his model, the spirit of the libretto was entirely Krausian.³⁶ Unrelieved by the joyful slapstick of Nestroy's comedies, *Kehraus* presented a gallery of fools, most of them mercenary and corrupt. It was Vienna as Kraus saw it and described it in *Die Fackel*, a city of lying journalists, prostitutes, bribetakers, profiteers, snobs, drunken policemen, slovenly Schrammel musicians,† greedy cozeners—in short, a circus, a universal Prater, where an industrialist fronts a freak show, an officer of the guards peddles dirty pictures, a vintner's daughter turned whore calls herself Ria Conradi and wins a beauty contest. What, then, should be made of the happy ending? He may have been a hustler, but Othmar meant what he said. Did Krenek?

Astonishingly, he did, even though he had lavished so much imagination on representing a substantial number of not atypical Viennese as morally bankrupt and unrelievedly silly. In the end his heart got the better of him. Still in the mood of *Reisebuch*, he thought that somehow the paramilitarists of the Heimwehr on the right and the Schutzbund on the left would come to their senses and join forces for the preservation of Austria and her heritage. Much as it amused him to emulate Kraus and apply the lash to his compatriots, he had nonetheless what many years afterward he called “a relatively optimistic attitude toward developments in Austria.”³⁷ This would change, however.

Like the libretto, the music suffered from a profusion of quickly shifting, sometimes contradictory effects, being by turns sweet and sour, at one moment melodious and lyrical, at the next sardonic in its parodying of hackneyed street music. Moreover, *Kehraus* was a transitional work that looked two ways. One of the last of Krenek's scores to bear the imprint of Schubert and quite the last to attempt the poignance or the richness and sweep of Puccini (and this only in the ambiguous final scene), the opera gives almost everywhere an impression of tonality. The melodic lines, the phrasing, and the rhythmical patterns and emphases suggest cadences and resolutions, and long sections are set in straightforward keys and conventional triadic harmony—as, for example, a charming first-act aria in C major praising wine, sunlight, and a serene, old-fashioned pastoral life, reminiscent of a song in *Reisebuch*. This aria and a prayer that Elisabeth offers to the Holy Mother at the beginning of the second act are very Schubertian. In contrast, tonality in the form of tedious melodic and cadential clichés is employed effectively to suggest the cru-

*It would seem utterly unlikely that such a patched-together “plot,” if that is the word, could have a parallel. Nevertheless, Eugen von Horvath later wrote a play entitled *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald* (Tales from the Vienna Woods), which so resembled *Kehraus* that when, many years later, Krenek's libretti were being published, the editors rejected *Kehraus* not because it was so long and confused but because it had “already been done”! Later they relented and included it.

†Schrammel music is performed in taverns by a trio consisting of a violin, a guitar, and an accordion. Sometimes a second violin is added. The quality is not high.

dity of the Berlin entrepreneur and the vulgarity of the Prater crowds and their amusements.

Elsewhere, though, Krenk includes indications that he was moving on from tonality, making use of chords built out of fourths, of polytonality, of abrupt and virtually inexplicable transitions, and of chords so dense and indeterminate as to be impossible to identify. Toward the end Elisabeth laments her apparent loss of Othmar, and while her vocal line suggests tonality and might easily have been accompanied by familiar harmonies, the music twists and jerks in harsh and unexpected ways until Othmar appears and they celebrate their love in an appealing canonic duet.

This sudden shift of modes is dramatically effective, as similar shifts elsewhere in the work might have been if Krenk had not been trying to do so much. To be sure, he had lost none of his ingenuity. In a scene set in a wine garden in which the characters quarrel and gradually drink themselves into a stupor, Krenk adds voices as one after another becomes intoxicated, moving from a solo part to a tightly woven ensemble having eight distinct parts. The composing is immensely skillful, but its virtues are obscured by the contradictory nature of the libretto, for this scene, in which the characters display their grossness, concludes with, of all things, a winsome song praising wine and the simple life. Just how is one supposed to take this? Nor is this a trivial consideration, for the song concludes the first act, and might be supposed from its position to be communicating an essential attitude, even a fundamental judgment. Are these slovens after all just good-natured souls on a holiday?

Another, more successful instance of musical ingenuity occurs when a violent quarrel is set as a four-part fugue. And finally, a scene that Krenk himself admired for its tautness and cleverness depicts simultaneously the industrialist struggling to save his factory, unemployed workers demonstrating, and the Hungarian con man being exposed and slain for his treachery, while through it all are interspersed voices singing a trivial waltz tune in a nearby beer joint. As a cross-section of a society floundering in chaos and loutishness, the scene works well, and the music is brilliantly apt. But such close coherence is to be found only in individual scenes. For the whole, Krenk had simply taken on more than he could cope with.

Reflecting on the work a little more than a half-century later, Krenk estimated its merits fairly. "I think it is not a bad piece," he mused. "[There is] some good music in it. Not [in] all of it, but [in] some sections."³⁸ At the time, it seemed good enough to be staged at Leipzig, where Brecher tentatively accepted it, asking only that Krenk change the name of the Berlin capitalist. Krenk obliged, substituting the gross-sounding "Kabulcke" for Goldstein. Strnad began making sketches for the sets. But Brecher was now in a difficult position. The stink bombs that greeted the opening of *Mahagonny* the previous March had forced him to cancel that production. The governing board was demanding economies and had made drastic cuts in his budget, while Universal Edition, feeling the pinch of reduced royalties from the contemporary works it specialized in, was demanding almost half of the money he

had for the right to stage *Kehraus*. Although talk of a production continued for some time, Krenek himself came to believe that it was too risky in the prevailing atmosphere. On July 7, 1931, he wrote to a friend saying that it was now impractical to think of staging it. His satirical attacks were too concrete to be made palatable by the distancing effect of the operatic medium.³⁹

It should not be thought that Brecher lacked courage. He staged the premiere of *Der Silbersee* (The silver sea) by Weill and Georg Kaiser on February 19, 1933, even though both men were on the Nazis' proscribed list and Hitler had been named chancellor less than three weeks earlier. (The official banning of modernist works had not yet taken place.) For this he was openly threatened in the review of the opera published in the Leipzig party paper. By May he was being accused of falsifying texts, particularly those of Wagner; in fact he had simply made the usual cuts that saved performance time and reduced costs. Shortly afterward he resigned his post, and the following year he and his family emigrated to Belgium, where in 1940 they all committed suicide as the German army closed in.

Had it been staged at the same time as *Jonny*, *Kehraus* might have enjoyed a modest success, even though it lacked the spectacular effects of *Jonny* and the rich musicality of *Orest*. But in 1931 even Krenek's past success in Leipzig could not save it. Other managers rejected it out of hand, and soon Krenek gave up any attempt to have it performed. With it, what was left of Krenek's Neoromanticism came to an end. But not the influence of Schubert: although Krenek's music would shortly undergo another profound change, that influence would never cease.

6 · DOUBTS, DISMAY, AND THE SEARCH FOR NEW DIRECTIONS: 1930–1932

When Ernst Krenek decided in the summer of 1928 to make Vienna his permanent home, Austria seemed to him quiet and stable. Yet there were signs of instability and troubles to come.

Since 1920 the nation had been governed by the conservative Christian Social party, which was supported by the aristocrats, the landowners and peasants, the Catholic clergy, the army officers, and most of the civil servants. Ignaz Seipel, its leader and the chancellor of Austria in 1922–1924 and again in 1926–1929, was an ordained priest convinced that sovereignty should rest on piety and authority. Under his leadership the government had moved further and further to the right. Opposing the Christian Socials were the Social Democrats, who governed Vienna and had the support of the industrial workers, the trade unionists, and most of the intellectuals—particularly the Jewish ones. It had carried out municipal reforms, constructed hospitals and apartments for workers, subsidized theaters and orchestras, and sponsored a variety of musical and cultural events such as the choral and orchestral concerts conducted by Webern for the benefit of workers and their families. Since 1926 it had become increasingly Marxist and anti-Catholic.

Allied with these parties were a pair of paramilitary organizations that, though illegal, were tolerated and even tacitly accepted. The far-right Heimwehr (Home Guard), formed in the early days of the republic, had many ex-officers and veterans in its ranks and was powerful in the provinces and the outlying cities. The *Schutzbund* (Defense Alliance) had been formed shortly afterward by the Social Democrats to protect party members from the Heimwehr. Enmity between the two groups was bitter. During the summer of 1927, while Krenek was traveling in France before joining Bekker at his new post in Wiesbaden, riots broke out in Vienna when Social Democrats demonstrated over the acquittal of three Heimwehr

members accused of killing two *Schutzbund*ers. The trade unions called a general strike, which was broken by the *Heimwehr*, and the Social Democrats found that they had fewer sympathizers in the police force and the army than they had supposed. The aftermath left the party much weakened, with many of its more radical members turning in disgust to the Communist party. The *Heimwehr*, which had been taken over by a clever and charismatic monarchist, Prince Rüdiger von Starheimberg, became more fascistic and menacing.

During his first term, Chancellor Seipel had brought an end to Austria's postwar inflation by arranging an international loan through the League of Nations, for which the League exacted a promise that Austria would not unite with Germany. But Austria was left after the war with a comparatively large urban population (one-third of the people lived in Vienna) and greatly reduced arable land, which meant that it had to import large amounts of food while seeking to expand its industries from a very inadequate base. The nation's economy therefore remained fragile and extremely vulnerable to changes in the international market, as the international depression, the effects of which were especially acute in Austria, made clear.

By the spring of 1931 things had become so bad that the Christian Socials attempted to form a customs union with Germany for the supposed benefit of both nations. Seeing this as the first step toward a complete union, the governments of France, Italy, and Czechoslovakia immediately protested. Using Austria's foreign debts as a weapon, the French brought such pressure to bear that the *Credit-Anstalt*, Austria's largest bank, collapsed, bringing the government down with it. A month later the British came to the bank's rescue, and the Christian Socials formed a new government, in which the *Heimwehr* was a powerful force. To save Austria's economy, the authorities dropped the plan for a customs union and, after pledging to remain independent for at least twenty years, negotiated another loan through the League of Nations; this enabled the nation to stumble along, though poverty and hardship afflicted even the most remote villages and were especially harsh in Vienna, Linz, and Graz. There had long been a Pan-German party in Austria, and now it included many Nazi sympathizers. Their numbers grew as the economy worsened; for many people the boldness and seeming vigor and discipline of the Nazis and their Austrian counterpart, the *Heimwehr*, had strong appeal.

Absorbed in his music, Krenek did not realize at first how great was the potential for trouble. The uproar over the Vienna production of *Jonny* was immediately outdone by popular acclaim and seemed to him an aberration brought about by an annoying but insignificant little band of malcontents. In their bemusement with *Gemütlichkeit*, the Viennese disliked pushing issues to conclusions and confrontations and, with a few notable exceptions such as Karl Kraus, tried to pretend that nothing was seriously wrong—at least at first. Thus for a short time Krenek could enjoy the innocent enthusiasms and optimism reflected in his *Reisebuch* and his talk before the Schubert Congress. In that speech, besides defending that composer's

musicianship, he had argued that because it was again small and independent, Austria could function as a self-centered sphere (a swipe at the Pan-Germans) as it had in Schubert's time and once more contribute to the culture of all German-speaking peoples. It could offer what was needed to restore humane forms of existence opposed to industrialism, speed, progress, and similar madresses. He was coming more and more to see in Old Austria the traditions and values with which to counter the rising barbarism of the rest of the world. In his own way, Krenek, too, was moving to the right.

He would soon have a larger readership for his ideas. Friedrich Gubler, with whom he had enjoyed conversations while living in Zürich, was close to him in age and had become a loyal admirer of his music and faithful correspondent after Krenek had left that city. Married to the daughter of a wealthy corporation lawyer who disapproved of his liberal views, Gubler was employed as secretary of the Schweizerische Werkbund (Swiss Work Federation), an alliance of architects, designers, and craftsmen, and wrote occasionally for the literary (*feuilleton*) pages of German-language papers. On May 23, 1929, he wrote to Krenek that he had been offered a loose working relation with the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. This splendid paper, almost three-quarters of a century old at the time, was, in the words of Peter Gay, "democratic, liberal, but free of parties; its tone was reasonable, its coverage wide, its politics intelligent and wholly independent. In its makeup and its stories, it refused to adopt fashionable sensationalism. . . . Its commitment to the best in modern culture emerged in its championship of modern poets and playwrights"—and he might have added composers. "The *Frankfurter Zeitung*," Gay concludes, "sought to heal the fragmentation of party-ridden Germany with reason. But this, it turned out, was not the kind of wholeness most Germans were looking for."¹ At the moment, however, the paper was at the height of its excellence and influence on German-speaking intellectuals. Although Gubler did not at once take up the offer, at year's end he did accept appointment as the editor of its literary page, a remarkable post for a young and comparatively unknown Swiss.² After he had settled in Frankfurt, Krenek visited him in March 1930 and in the course of their talks agreed to become a regular contributor of essays and reviews, particularly on musical matters. By November things were going so well that Krenek contracted with Gubler for two essays a month, with acceptance conditional.³

These would not be his first contributions, for before Gubler took the job, the paper's music critic, Karl Holl, had asked Krenek, as the composer of *Jonny*, for his impressions of J. W. Johnson's *Der weisse Neger* (The white Negro), a sensational book being serialized in the paper. As Krenek really knew no more about such things than the next man, his comments, printed on November 25, 1928, were negligible. Yet a connection with the paper had been established, even though, engaged as he was with *Anbruch* and Adorno, Krenek made no use of it.

Matters now, however, were different. He had been approached by a good friend and he had motive for writing: Bernard Diebold, who had covered the Berlin production of *Leben des Orest* for the paper, had disparaged Krenek's treatment of Greek legends, and Krenek sent in a strong defense that was published on March 22, 1930. This was followed shortly by a review of the premiere in Brno of Leoš Janáček's *Auf einem Totenhaus* (From the house of the dead), reviews of books about Wagner and Bach, and, toward the year's end, "Arbeitsprobleme des Komponisten" (The working problems of composers), a discussion with Adorno of a composer's relations with his time, which was broadcast on the Frankfurt radio during November.⁴

Meanwhile, Krenek's mood was changing from the short-lived optimism of *Reisebuch* into apprehension over the future of Austria and the traditional values and pious, unhasty folkways that he found so attractive. Although he did not feel personally endangered, he saw in the gains by the Nazis in the German elections of 1930 and the increasing aggressiveness of their Austrian admirers a general drift toward ignobility and a loutish animus against all forms of excellence, especially in the arts and the life of the mind. Increasingly the articles in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* dealt with economic and political problems, and they aroused in Krenek an uncharacteristic desire for some kind of action. On December 5, 1930, he complained to Gubler that the paper confused the reader with its "enfeebled liberalism," which caused it to publish both sides of any argument. He said it should take a stand. Gubler replied mildly, agreeing that perhaps the literary page was too decorous. He would welcome Krenek's impressions.

Even before Gubler's response had reached him, Krenek had begun filling page after page of what he called a "monologue" in defense of individualism and the private life, taking a position shared, as he pointed out, with another contributor, the Austrian novelist Joseph Roth—who, he told Gubler, would be Krenek's friend were they ever to meet. Written in a spirit of exuberant self-assertion unimpeded by its political naiveté, the monologue reflected not so much Krenek's anxieties, acute as these were becoming, as a wish to create a commotion in the staid literary section. For all that, it was not a call for action such as might be expected under the circumstances, but a spirited justification of *inaction*. In what might be regarded as an attempt to vindicate his own secluded way of life, Krenek wrote:

I think it is a demagogic fiction that the distribution of the means of production is the cause of our cultural nadir. It is much more its [industrialism's] character that desecrates mankind, and thus it matters little whether the profit flows into the pockets of the managing directors, who are as much dreary simpletons as their underlings, or into a government treasury. . . . Insofar as it is a question of bettering the material lot of the laborer, every possibility must be pursued in the most earnest manner. But that spiritual improvement would be brought about that way is wholly illusory,

because the benumbing labor and shoddy products of industry enslaved equally the owner and the worker. There remains, he said with the confidence of one who had the means freely to pursue his own interests, only the appeal to the individual—art. “The experience of art is something wholly personal, in which social points of view play no part. A society as such should neither demand nor spurn art. Generally, society has nothing to do with it; only the individual does.”⁵ This, of course, was his old argument against Adorno, transferred from musical to social commentary.

He sent off the monologue at once, and thus it crossed in the mail Gubler’s request for his impressions. Even though he had just written at length, he responded at once to the request with an immense diatribe on the dreariness of contemporary life and what he regarded as the self-serving excuses made for it. Seizing on Gubler’s admission that the paper might be too genteel, Krenek wrote, “We are all too mild and elegiac while in the meantime our world decays.” The feuilleton, he said, was just the thing for pressing the attack—indeed, the only suitable form because it was free from ideology. It allowed the private blow. “I maintain the authority of the individual personality. . . . Not only the *argumentum ad hominem* but also the *ab hominem* is surely the strongest.” Gubler had said that the conditions of the times made individual action difficult, but Krenek would not allow this:

I take the determinism of the situation, which you mention, to be an endless excuse for everything. Each hides himself nowadays behind these comfortable ghosts and from the beginning renounces any personal opposition. If one commits a crime of passion, then the circumstances are to blame, and if louts demolish streetcars because of the films of Remarque [a reference to the riots over *All Quiet on the Western Front*], their behinds are not thrashed because the condition of the poor wretches has brought them to it. Then, too, Herr Hitler and Herr [Henry] Ford or other such apocalyptic brutes are never compelled to justify themselves; they, too, are born from the inexhaustibly fruitful womb of this mysterious situation. . . . It seems futile to me when the blame for all evil is placed on the social condition and good is expected from change. In the first place, we won’t change it, and second, there is nothing to change; third, it would avail nothing because it is not the distribution but the nature of the means of production that is the evil thing, as I said earlier; fourth, if it really should be brought about, this would be a displacement of the process *ad calendae Græcas*, and that would take us too long. Each must immediately seek, here, now, and today, the right way without waiting for the salvation of the world. I will to the end protest the idea that any social condition could really affect the innermost stratum of the personality. . . . The judgments that we encounter and require occur in regions where the social plays no role whatsoever; only the spiritual support of the artistically realized restraint [does].⁶

There could scarcely be a more indicative measure of how aloof Krenek had been, virtually from birth, from the events afflicting ordinary citizens than this extraordinary statement. Where, one wonders, had he been all this time that he could suppose

that even his own personality could remain unaffected at its innermost stratum by social conditions such as those represented by the fall of the empire, by the general strikes, by the hardships besetting his father, by the triumph of *Jonny*, by the failure to find a producer for *Kehraus*? One is divided between astonishment at the innocence of such a passage and irritation at its haughty egotism. But Krenek deserves his due. Earlier in the letter he had said, "What is missing, in order to provide that which you call intellectual scope, is, in a certain sense, the vehemence of attack, the sharp blow, the gesture of aggression." Here they were, in abundance.

Gubler may have supposed that Krenek's next contribution to his page would be an attack, a blow, a gesture of aggression, but what he got was a charmingly whimsical essay, "Aus Gründen der Kontrolle" (For reasons of control), on the strict management of a Berlin hotel! In the long canon of his prose works, nothing exceeds in winsomeness this delightful sketch. Krenek hoped that Gubler and his associates would like it, for he wanted to try his hand at another of the same sort. They did indeed, but it was far removed from what Krenek had been demanding of their paper. So much for telling them they were too mild!⁷

Neither the gaiety of his hotel piece nor the contentiousness of his diatribe gave a hint of the direction in which Krenek's feelings were actually veering. On March 16, 1931, he wrote to Gubler saying that in recent months he had experienced "spiritual isolation and almost actual physical paralysis and dumbness." Were he to recite the causes Gubler might think him a hypochondriac and his ailments imaginary, but no one could convince him that this was the case.

What had put him into such a deep funk? His anxiety over the new barbarism threatening Austria certainly played a part. He was not worried about financial security, for he had carefully invested the royalties from *Jonny* and *Orest*, and although he had suffered some losses from the depression, he had enough for life on the modest scale that he and Berta had adopted since settling in Vienna. In fact, it was too modest, and this, too, played a part. The seclusion that had seemed so inviting now brought loneliness and boredom, especially for Berta. She was used to the variety and bustle of life in the theaters of Berlin and Kassel, where she had family and friends. Her health had been poor since early 1929, and she suffered from periods of despondency and discomfort that culminated in a severe attack of sciatica in January 1932. Their friends were few because the Schönberg group, the only musical circle in Vienna toward which they might be drawn, kept them at a distance. Moreover, Krenek, who tended to fret over little irregularities, particularly when they related to money, was now upset because the *Frankfurter Zeitung* had paid him for more contributions than it had accepted and he felt in debt to it. He was annoyed that Gubler sometimes turned down his pieces but gave him no guidance. He was especially irritated over their not having published an essay he had written in response to Bertolt Brecht's "maligning" and "lewd" attacks on opera as

a "culinary art" for the delection of the bourgeoisie, though in the meantime it had accepted Brecht's "Music and Society." Did Brecht's writing, he asked, really have so much more merit than his own?

He might have been less perturbed by such minor matters, and his spirits might have risen in spite of his apprehensions and the somberness of his household, if *Kehraus* had been accepted. But as the months passed, Brecher's hesitation and the failure of Universal Edition to place the opera anywhere else brought on disheartening self-doubts. He was also coming to recognize that his efforts to recover the primordial experience and significance of tonal music were approaching an unavoidable end. In *Jonny, O Lacrymosa*, the three one-act operas, *Orest*, *Kehraus*, and the other works of his Neoromantic period, he had, as it were, used up all the revivifying stratagems he could think of. The ideas and devices that occurred to him now took him further and further away from tonality.

He saw that he had three choices. He could stay with tonality, but then he risked repeating and boring himself and subverting his standards of excellence. He could abandon tonality once more, as he had when he went to study in Berlin in 1920, except that he had lost his youthful desire for spectacular effects (though he was just as capable of them as ever, as time would show), and, just as he had come to respect tradition and custom in social behavior, so he had come to want a considerable degree of preordination in music such as the conventions of triadic harmony provided. Finally, he could give up composing and seek another occupation. So profound was the malaise afflicting him that he was seriously considering this last option.

Feeling the need for a change, Krenek went that summer to stay at Sierre, where he had visited Rilke five years earlier. From there he wrote to Gubler on July 7 to say that *Kehraus* was doomed to remain a "miscarriage" because of its offensiveness and that he was obliged to call into question the deepest fundamentals of his profession. He had been wandering in a blind alley, he said, and must find the way to a new career. He would be glad to have Gubler's advice.

However much Krenek's recent fretfulness may have worn on Gubler, that good man responded at once. After saying how sorry he was that things were going badly, he praised Krenek's recent book reviews, citing the skill with which Krenek analyzed the works and supported his judgments with apt quotations. He would send more books, but only if they were worthy of Krenek's attention. Then he made a remarkable suggestion: Krenek and his wife should come to Frankfurt. The change would do them both good, and Krenek could help with the editorial work of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He would be well paid.⁸

It was an apt suggestion, for Krenek had always enjoyed writing: in his teens he had liked it better than composing. Krenek was also touched by Gubler's words of esteem and, as if to confirm them, sent in an essay entitled "Im Wallis" (In Valais), in which he described the charming region around Sierre in a manner reminiscent

of the descriptive passages in his letters home about his Berlin rambles with Fritz Demuth. Then he enlarged on his personal circumstances. At last he had begun to be concerned about money matters. (The Credit-Anstalt Bank had failed in mid-May.) However, there was deeper cause for worry. It was better during the period of extreme inflation eight years earlier, he said, than at present because then artists remained confident about the importance of their work. "We believed in the artistic, independent of the events of the moment." But now "sociology," with its insistence that composers justify their role in relation to these events, had undermined this belief (by "sociology" he meant the arguments put forward by Adorno).⁹ He felt trapped, he told Gubler, between the pressure to participate in the affairs of the day and his natural disinclination to do any such thing. He had become so distracted by these affairs that he could no longer write a note that would stand up under scrutiny.

Questions about the external significance of such activities [as composing] make them impossible from the outset, and the inner significance, the immanent value, as far as can be determined, appears to be secondary; yes, it even becomes aesthetic vanity. . . . With the instability of such inner criteria, the impulse to such work diminishes. Are more symphonies, sonatas, quartets, concertos, etc. still demanded? All is suspended in an airless space. . . . There remains for me nothing but to believe that only deliverance from the illusion of the relevance of art to the situation of society really makes [artistic] action possible once more.

One reason for the debacle, he thought, was that there were no longer customers who valued music for its own sake. But were not the composers, who had repeatedly asserted that the inner aspects did not matter, themselves to blame? (He was thinking of Eisler, Hindemith, and other proponents of music for use.)

If we surrender, we must not be surprised if we are no longer believed. I am troubled by the feeling that we bend and warp our nature in order to make something fruitful. . . . [Did he have in mind his own Neoromantic music?] Overcome by auto-suggestion, we begin to be quite bored because we have become so tolerant that nothing matters to us anymore. Then what does concern us? All that I imagine as possible works seem to me trivial, false, aimless—in reality, ephemeral, superfluous.

People (by which he meant Brecht) were asking if music and theater were even needed, whereas not long before it had been taken for granted that they were. Such skepticism seemed to him a declaration of spiritual bankruptcy. "Today nihilism is no longer the exception but rather a social convention. . . . The modern world seems to me like a society of madmen who play with hand grenades as if they were tennis balls." He could not help thinking that an idealistic demand for social reform was trivial and naive. "For me it is not far removed from the mentality of respectable pastors' wives who knit wool stockings for bushmen on the assumption that they will become good Christians if they only pull these on."¹⁰

Krenek closed his gloomy recital with a request that Gubler grant him time to think over the invitation to come to Frankfurt, which he took very seriously. He needed to wait for the muddled situation to clarify itself. Gubler, who understood him well, realized that there had to be more to the matter than the letter admitted. Such a failure of nerve was not brought on by Adorno's "sociology," to which Krenek had stood up so stoutly, by Brecht's attacks on "culinary art," to which Krenek had replied so vehemently, or by the fad for utilitarian music, the absurdities of which Krenek would expose a few months later in his scathing review of a collection of essays extolling the music of children. Replying on July 24, Gubler said that he had read Krenek's letter with the greatest sympathy. He understood Krenek's account of his troubles but thought he had reached a pause in his life that Krenek had not yet explored thoroughly enough.

In no way [he wrote] do I believe that a man whose destiny is to create must build himself an ideological box in which to live and out of which to work. I do not want to appear occult, but I think that the doubt and the perturbation in which you presently stand signify the foretelling of a work, a kind of work whose outer and inner relations neither you nor anyone else can foresee.

(He may not have been occult, but events would show that he was prescient to an uncanny degree.)

It is not true, and I have never believed, that a contemporary artist must obtain a sociological understanding of the present in order to be able to work. I cannot believe other than that the true artist makes these sociological significances and relationships visible, as it were, in an unconscious way.

He offered as an example Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*, in which sociological insights emerged unintentionally from the mere accuracy of Goethe's observations. "If you have gotten into a turmoil of conflict between independent liberal artistic creation and the issue of the necessity of the product of this creativity, this is simply an indication that you can no longer suppress reflections of the kind you expressed to me in your fine letter."¹¹ Whether he knew it or not, Gubler was giving back to Krenek the very arguments the latter had used against Adorno in their exchange of essays during the spring of 1929.

Writing the very next day, so promptly did the mail move between Frankfurt and Vienna, Krenek said that he agreed with his friend's fundamental thesis, as well he might since it was his own. It came down, he said, to a division between the absolutism of the creative and the relativism of theoretical sociology. The present emphasis on relativism obscured all other content and even sought to substitute for it. "I have now made it precisely my duty to find the lost direction, and your good letter is a welcome and indispensable confirmation of this intention."¹² He made no

reference to Gubler's observation that the real causes of his troubles lay deeper, and for the moment let rest the matter of coming to Frankfurt to work. Rather, he planned to travel in the Alps and to return to Vienna by way of Germany. This journey was to be critical in his search for the lost direction.

Recently he had been reading the essays and fiction of Joseph Roth, who is best known to English-speaking readers for his novel about life in imperial Austria entitled *Radetzky March* (published in 1932). Krenek was much impressed by Roth's monarchism and his admiration of aristocratic elegance in art and conduct—an attitude that reinforced Krenek's own patrician biases and the effect on him of Kraus's contempt for the masses, their amusements, and their forms of self-expression. In this frame of mind Krenek confronted—for the first time, so he thought—what he called “the whole shabby reality” brought about in Germany and Austria by technology at the service of mass consumption, by the economic depression, by the loutish Nazis, and by media catering to escapism, jingoism, and militaristic fantasies.

After visiting Gubler in Frankfurt in late August 1931 he had gone on to Kassel and Leipzig; what he saw filled him with disgust and, finally, dread. In Kassel he had attended a concert at the Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, which he described in the first of two long tirades he sent to Gubler on September 10 and 12 after returning to Austria. These letters were disfigured by coarseness and an ugly spirit wholly foreign to his usual mode of expression, even when he was writing privately about things he despised. Perhaps such a falling away from his high standards—the only one in all his voluminous writing, public and private—is a measure of his despondency, and of a new factor: fear. He may have been projecting on the victims of his excoriations an obscure self-contempt. Otherwise it is difficult to account for such excessive rancor.

The so-called high society—Jews, pensioned generals, officials, and other rabble [he wrote]—occupied with anxious, timorous whispers some ornate Wilhelmish state rooms sparsely lighted with candles and let itself be painfully imposed upon by beautiful music of the eighteenth century. Partly it had unconscious anxiety lest the kaiser enter majestically and drive the merchants from the temple because they had entered his palace without the customary felt slippers; partly it had conscious anxiety lest it be pelted with stones by the unemployed because of this deplorably shabby excess. Afterward in the Schloss Hotel they dared eat nothing because of anxiety and cast furtive glances from one dish to another so that in fact each ordered less than the other. What a sewer, what a horror.

Once back in his homeland—the land of the troglodytes, as he called it—he found the radio attempting to soothe the soul with the “brain-softening mush of this Jewish-contaminated yodel culture in concentrated form.” The land—the mild, beautiful, autumnal Salzkammergut—seemed sad and weeping. “We last, who no-

tice it, will take it to the grave with us as best we can. Joseph Roth will understand. . . . You might show this letter to him if you wish. I have not spoken to him about it; the horrible filth that fills Germany and its consciousness is something infinitely more serious than the private grumblings of a fool.”*

In his second letter he told of hearing over the radio the music Austrians really like: hideous “crow music” (perhaps a reference to “yodel culture”), zither trios, peasant choirs, lubberly marches, and excruciating trash about love. He and his wife had gone, under dreary, lowering skies, on a journey by auto through “this Paradise Lost,” catching glimpses of a beautiful older time—of natural parks and wooded valleys, the emperor’s hunting grounds by the Attersee, and a serene landscape full of “symmetry” in the sense that Goethe used that term. All this beauty from an aristocratic past was overrun by tourists and autos and contaminated by public figures such as operetta stars. They had passed the villa where Franz Joseph had spent his summers. Only two modest lanterns marked the entrance. “Manifesting itself therein,” he told Gubler, “is a characteristic feature of the Austrian—the humbleness and seclusion of the greatest, the long time, the abidingness—true traits that are just as evident to me in Schubert and Stifter. Just those pure things which modern development tramples under.”† Later in the evening he had listened to a radio reading of poetry by Fritz von Unruh.

I perceived only an oppressive voice of command that spoke of battlefields, war monuments, spilled blood, lost generations, and repeatedly cried, “Into the dust with all enemies of Brandenburg!” How improper, how vulgar, how vile, coarse, even obscene it seemed to me into the bargain, in this place [the mountainous country southeast of Salzburg]! With enthusiasm I put myself in the ranks of the enemies of Brandenburg. . . . I know little of the content of the reading. But imbued as I was by the Austrian spirit, this whole programmatic and pathetic deluge—for or against war—seemed senseless and depressing. . . . One system is as horrible as another. What are these occupations for grown men?‡

The poetry was followed by more waltzes and marches.¹³

For some reason the usually discriminating Gubler thought this paltry stuff worthy of publication. Perhaps he had been swayed by Krenek’s charge that the *Frankfurter Zeitung* was too mild and neutral. He wrote on September 15 to say that he

*The allusions to Jews and Jewish “contaminated” yodel culture are astonishing. Nowhere in his hundreds of essays and reviews, his many hundreds of letters, or his long hours of intimate conversation with this writer has Krenek even hinted at anti-Semitism. The choice of the name Goldstein for the disagreeable businessman in *Kehms* was unfortunate, for it accorded well with ugly Nazi imagery. Yet, as was noted earlier, Krenek intended only to take a small revenge by using the name of a man who he believed had cheated him. The fact that he proposed showing this letter to Roth, who had suffered for his Jewishness, suggests that Krenek did not sense the import of his words.

†Adalbert Stifter (1806–1868) defended morality, sobriety, and high culture and disdained the “wretched degeneration” of the times in his novel *Der Nachsommer* (Indian summer), published in 1857.

‡Krenek must have been listening with less than his usual acuity because Unruh was an eloquent antiwar, antimilitarist poet and playwright. When Hitler came to power he emigrated to Italy and France and eventually settled in the United States. He won both the Kleist and Schiller Prizes for his writing.

would like to print excerpts from the letters; Krenek replied on September 17 that he was pleased that Gubler liked the letters, but he begged him to be discreet because even if Krenek's name were omitted, there were people, including some about whom he had written, who would recognize his style. The warning came too late. Gubler had gone ahead without waiting for Krenek's permission. Headed "From Letters of an Austrian Friend" and preceded by an explanation that what followed had not been written for publication but was offered "straight from the liver," because misgivings about the sad state of Austria were rarely expressed with such clarity, the letters were published on the very day that Krenek wrote asking his friend to be careful. Gubler's discretion consisted merely of omitting Krenek's name, dropping the phrase "Jews, pensioned generals, officials, and other rabble," changing "Jewish-contaminated yodel culture" to "eastern yodel culture," identifying Unruh as merely "a German poetry reader," and a few other minute modifications.

Krenek was furious. He had been right in supposing that he would be identified as the "Austrian friend," and on September 22 he wrote to Gubler that already he was having to deal with insults and, most distressing of all, with the sad reproaches of his Kassel friends, who thought him duplicitous even though he had expressed such opinions while among them and had assured them at the time that he was not thinking of them. As for his Viennese friends, they simply refused to believe that his letters, which to them signaled heretofore unrecognized madness or an illness calling for sympathy, had not been written for publication or had been published without his authorization. But within a week he had cooled down, for the Viennese paper, the *Neue Wiener Journal*, which he had mentioned in passing, had not attacked him as he had expected, and he had begun to hear favorable comments on the letters. To account for what he now called his "unexpected reaction" to the letters' publication, he wrote to Gubler on October 3 explaining that long trips always left him full of panic and depression. Perhaps so, but panic such as he presently felt was something new. He now understood how perilous was Austria's condition. On September 13, the day after he had written his second tirade, the Heimwehr had unsuccessfully attempted in Graz a coup d'état aimed at gaining control of the province of Styria. Yet he had to admit that the Heimwehr men that he saw were good-natured enough.¹⁴

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He had not yet responded to Gubler's invitation to join the staff of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Meanwhile, a new force that might incline him to do so was at work. In the fall of 1930, at about the time Gubler contracted with him for two essays a month, he had been admitted to the small circle around Karl Kraus, publisher and for many years the sole contributor to *Die Fackel*. Kraus, whom Krenek had long read and admired, was to become the most important influence on him outside music.¹⁵

They were introduced by Hans Heinsheimer, an enterprising editor and promotional agent of Krenek's own age who was head of the opera department at Universal Edition. He and Krenek first met at Donaueschingen in the summer of 1921, and they met again when Heinsheimer attended the premiere of *Zwingsburg*. Now that Krenek was living in Vienna they met occasionally, and Heinsheimer knew of Krenek's admiration for Kraus. Universal Edition wanted to use Kraus's translation of the libretto of Offenbach's *La pèrichole* for a German-language edition of the operetta, and to obtain Kraus's permission Heinsheimer had undertaken the almost impossible task of gaining his friendship. Kraus was all but unapproachable. He wanted no contact with his admirers, refusing to respond to their greetings or even insulting them when an encounter was unavoidable. But Heinsheimer, who was even more brash than Kraus was intractable, used his considerable charm to insinuate himself into Kraus's little group. Once there he remembered Krenek, for it seemed to him, as he put it years afterward, that they were "made for each other in the keenness of spirit, the pitilessness of their points of view, the elegant precision of their styles." He obtained permission to bring Krenek to a meeting, even though Kraus, who knew Krenek's stature as a composer perfectly well, disapproved of operas as an artificial yoking of music and drama. Krenek had the good sense to say little and was soon added to the short list of those invited to listen to the master when he voiced his outrage over current events. Later Berta was allowed to attend, but she made the mistake of objecting to one of Kraus's more extravagant sallies, and both were nearly banished on the spot. Krenek, meanwhile, had repaid Heinsheimer by being the one to ask Kraus if he would grant permission to use his translation.¹⁶

Fifty-six when Krenek met him, Kraus had been a notable figure in Vienna for three decades. As the founder in 1895 of *Die Fackel*, which he had written single-handedly since 1911, he was idolized by the young Viennese intellectuals for his social satire and antimilitarism. But it was his extremely popular readings from poetry, drama, and *Die Fackel*, rather than the magazine itself, that made him known throughout Germany and Austria—despite the silence of the press, which was the target of many of his most incisive thrusts. He could easily draw an audience of three thousand, especially when word went out that he would read from Shakespeare. He loved the theater and had thought of becoming an actor before he founded his magazine. His intensity and imperious manner served him well as writer and platform star but made relations with others extremely difficult. Sooner or later he quarreled with everyone near him, for he insisted on absolute agreement with his views, however outrageous or unjust, and rejected outright anyone so bold as even to hint at a different opinion. Venomous and relentless, he sought to destroy those he opposed, and he was constantly embroiled in personal vendettas with Viennese journalists, with the result that he spent many hours with lawyers conferring over lawsuits.

Anyone as pushy as Heinsheimer was surely headed for trouble, but at first all went well. Kraus agreed to let Universal Edition use his translation, provided that nothing, not a syllable, not a comma, was cut or altered. The German-language edition appeared, was immediately taken up by a number of theaters, and won instant success. Then word got back to Kraus that the publishers had made minute changes for the sake of singers and had not prevented directors from making others. Kraus was beside himself. He quarreled violently with Heinsheimer, whom he perceived as a traitor and archenemy, and threatened Universal Edition with legal action if the text was not instantly withdrawn.

Before the storm broke, however, Krenek had made himself more acceptable by extravagantly praising Kraus's revisions of Offenbach in the theater notes he wrote for the Cologne production of *La pèrichole*, which were published in the *Kölner Tribune*. His oblations were repeated in an essay for the Düsseldorf magazine *Theaterwelt* late in 1931. He survived the rupture with Heinsheimer.*

Kraus had renounced Judaism in 1899 and in 1911 had joined the Catholic church. In 1922, blaming Austria's part in the war on the monarchy and the church, he abandoned Catholicism, though he supported the republic despite its being in the control of the Christian Socials, the party of the church. (In Viennese politics he supported the Social Democrats, who controlled the city government.) Now, perceiving the threat of Hitler, he was turning again toward Catholicism, but he did not rejoin the church. His change of direction was to be an important influence on Krenek's thought.

Kraus himself could not be called a thinker. He was inflamed with moral zeal that bordered on the maniacal, and all about him he saw decay, which he attributed to moral relativism. He attacked immediate evils and what he took to be their immediate causes, not pausing to look for deeper social and cultural forces or to develop a systematic body of ideas. He believed in the necessity of tradition as a guide to conduct; without it there could be no greatness. But he had nothing on which to base this notion beyond a vague humanism, and as Wilma Iggers has remarked, he attacked people mainly for deviations from his standards of good taste, sympathy, beauty, and tact.¹⁷ (He, of course, could scarcely be said to adhere to these standards without exception!) Even where he was most deeply engaged he had no philosophy, only convictions: the most precious heritage of German-speaking people is their language; thought and language share a symbiotic relationship; the corruption of language is a sign and a cause of moral deterioration; the character of a writer is revealed by his use of language.

He spent hours each day going through the local papers looking for hypocrisy and sloppy prose—which he traced to the influence of Heine! He was never happier in his rage than when he could attack his particular bête noire, the *Neue Freie Presse*,

*Kraus was so pleased with Krenek's observations that he departed from his usual practice of writing all of the copy for *Die Fackel* and reprinted Krenek's Düsseldorf piece in *Die Fackel* for December 1931.

for its ties with the government, businessmen, and Jewish intellectuals, whom he held in contempt for what he regarded as their pharisaical materialism. More apolitical than not in practice, he was in his sympathies a conservative and aristocrat. Although he had been temporarily radicalized by his abhorrence of the war, he protested being identified with the left, for he rejected liberalism on the grounds that mankind is motivated by greed for money and power and is basically destructive, which makes progress impossible. He was inclined to belittle democracy, yet he advocated many social reforms and insisted on the right of total freedom in private and especially sexual conduct. He defended prostitutes as the victims of a corrupt society, yet he opposed the emancipation of women, whom he regarded as inferior to men in intelligence.

Life, for him, was a supreme value, and freedom meant freedom from interference with it. In his view—and here his influence on Krenek is particularly plain—machinery enslaved men by inhibiting their imaginations; technological advances were actually steps backward toward a brute condition. Still, for all his insistence on living freely, he offered no guidance on how this should be done. His thought was negative, his message one of despair. “The essential merit of Kraus,” Iggers writes, “was not a system which he might have left behind but a spirit of absolute earnestness and sincerity and integrity with which he thought to guide his contemporaries to the most intensive use of their faculties. In a very localized way he succeeded in giving a feeling of purpose to lives which no religion could have provided for them at that particular stage of development and in that locality.”¹⁸

Kraus was twenty-five and just beginning his career as a writer when he founded *Die Fackel* in 1899. At first he called on friends such as Peter Altenberg and Frank Wedekind for contributions, but after 1911 it served as a personal journal reflective of his interests, which in effect amounted to his hatreds. The slovenliness and complacency that he saw in the newspapers provided him with abundant material for satire, and he would show up at meetings of his circle with his pockets stuffed with clippings to be quoted, often without comment, for their silliness, their abuse of language, or their mendacity. When he did comment, his remarks were so witty and so brilliantly phrased that some read them simply for entertainment and did not take to heart their moralizing.

His prose was exceptionally concentrated and precise; yet it also abounded in allusiveness, wordplay, and gnomic aphorisms. To achieve such intensity and complexity without a superfluous syllable or the least incongruity, Kraus spent hours on revision. Krenek recalled his agonizing over a single comma, putting it in, removing it, and putting it in again. And in one of his epigrams he claimed that he labored longer over a word than other men would over a novel.¹⁹ Although he disliked experimental movements in writing and despised the Expressionists—Werfel most of all—he came in the end to writing prose so personal, complicated, and eccentric, yet unimpaired in its precision, that it was as hard to understand as the works of any

experimentalist. For this reason, and because so many of his allusions were purely local, his writing was little known outside Vienna. *Die Fackel* had all but ceased publication by the time Krenek made Kraus's acquaintance. The rise of the Nazis, which Kraus attributed in part to the publicity given them by the newspapers, signified the triumph of all he opposed. In 1933 he published only one number, and in the summer of 1934, a few days before the assassination of Chancellor Dollfuss by Austrian Nazis, he offered his final words, in a rambling, 330-page account entitled "Warum die Fackel nicht mehr erscheint" (Why *Die Fackel* no longer appears). His explanation: it was no longer possible to write satire because the brutes now dominating everything were too callous to be affected by it.

He was always an actor; indeed, some of his greatest rages were partly self-dramatizations. His readings were consummate performances, and their number is impressive: 313 in Vienna up to the summer of 1929, 68 in Berlin, 31 in Prague, 10 each in Munich and Paris, with others in Hamburg, Zürich, Graz, and Innsbruck.²⁰ For material he used articles about to appear in *Die Fackel*, selections from his own poetry, scenes from Goethe, Shakespeare, Schiller, Nestroy, Hauptmann, and Wedekind, and passages from Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*. Most remarkable of all were his renderings of operettas by Offenbach. Although he disapproved of opera and was the sworn enemy of kitsch, he managed to convince himself that operettas were the highest form of dramatic art. The artifice that he disliked in opera seemed just right for operettas because, he reasoned, they were fantasy anyway. Divorced from reality, they could achieve the purest theater, and in Offenbach's works they reached the ultimate. Kraus was not musical himself; he could not read music. But coached by Eduard Steuermann, who also served as his accompanist, he delivered Offenbach's lines in a kind of rhythmical *Sprechstimme*. Since he was particularly skillful at delineating character, the result was brilliantly funny. Krenek, who while in his teens had heard Kraus read *King Lear*, was enthralled by his performances and attended as often as he could. He was especially impressed by Kraus's rendering of Nestroy's comedies.

The meetings of the circle were themselves almost theatrical events. Once a month or thereabouts the chosen were told by Kraus's friend, Helene Kann, or her daughter, Eva Roeder, to meet at the Café Attaché on Argentinierstrasse. Kraus would arrive around ten o'clock and at once begin a ferocious attack on the duplicity of the world as revealed by the events of the day. These often included whatever was going on at the moment in lawsuits that Kraus had under way. Krenek simply listened for the most part. What he heard never included any mention of his own pieces in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Kraus had to be familiar with them since he read everything in that paper with minute attention. Perhaps his silence was a backhanded compliment: Krenek was not among the evildoers. Nor did Kraus ever mention Krenek's music. In fact, he never showed the slightest interest in what Krenek was doing. The others—a pair of lawyers, an actor, the director of the Vienna City Museum, a

baroness, and two or three other women, including Berta—were treated in much the same way. Kraus might pull a clipping from his pocket and ask, “What do you think of this?” in a tone that made clear what he expected by way of a reply. But his audience was there mainly to listen and agree. If Kraus had not finished when the *Attaché* closed at midnight, they would move on to the *Café Parsifal* on *Walfischgasse*, where they would remain until Kraus, who put in long hours of work, finally tired and went home to bed, leaving his admirers as worn out as himself, so intense had been his monologue, so close had been the attention demanded of them.²¹

So it was until the spring of 1933, when it appeared to Kraus that all his efforts had been for naught and he withdrew into himself, emerging only occasionally for another reading. Now and then the group would be brought together, but his health and morale were giving way. In Goebbels he saw the apotheosis of the cynical manipulator of language, totally corrupt and corrupting, laying waste the land of Goethe. He drove himself to his desk but published virtually nothing. By 1935 he was finished. Weakened by heart trouble, he died on June 12, 1936.

Since parting with Bekker, Krenek had lacked anyone with the strong-mindedness and purposefulness on which he depended when beset with the diffidence and uncertainty to which he was prone. Berta, though older and more professionally experienced than Anna Mahler had been, lacked the latter's energy and self-assurance. Alban Berg, who somewhat resembled Eduard Erdmann and might have played a role similar to Erdmann's in Krenek's life, was friendly but kept a distance between them. In his quiet way Gubler showed that he had the requisite qualities, but he was far away, just beginning to establish himself, and inclined in their relations to look up to Krenek as “the maestro.” Adorno, too, had the necessary qualities, but, like Gubler, he lived at a distance and was too much in awe of Krenek as a composer to serve. But Karl Kraus! With his iron will he offered just what Krenek's soul needed. They shared many beliefs and attitudes—in part, of course, because Krenek had for so long been a faithful reader of *Die Fackel*. Both were drawn toward what they took to be the traditional customs and values of old Catholic Austria. Both were disgusted by the Nazis and fearful of their influence in Austria. Both were inclined to feel alienated from their surroundings. And Kraus had a quality that Krenek greatly envied and desired for himself: the strength to stand alone and endure rejection, or, as Krenek termed it, “a splendid isolation . . . in aggressive disdain above the jungle of hostility.”²² For all his impishness, now in abeyance, Krenek admired strict discipline in the arts, and this, with his tendency to regard ordinary people with some contempt as easily manipulated cattle, made Kraus's writings particularly congenial. “From an early stage,” he later observed, “I have been attracted by the idea of pure, uncompromising creation, independent from the trends of the day, or at times explicitly opposed to them. I have always been greatly in sympathy with thinkers who examined our civilization and found it wanting.”²³ At this critical moment in his life, no one would serve better than Kraus to help bring his inchoate yearnings into order.

So it was that Kraus became, as has been remarked, the most important influence on Krenek outside music—a model, as Krenek said in 1971, “to this day.” Taking him as a measure of moral responsibility and commitment, of integrity and willingness to act and accept the consequences, Krenek now endeavored consciously to follow his example. Much of his vision of mankind was colored by Kraus’s writing, which signally affected his prose style as well. He enjoyed the shock and irreverence of puns and other verbal conceits, as he had always enjoyed sudden shifts and surprises in his music, and these became increasingly prominent in his libretti and the texts he wrote for his songs. But of far greater significance was Kraus’s unceasing struggle to achieve absolute correctness and avoid superfluous ornament. Krenek regarded Kraus as one of the greatest of all writers (a view from which he never departed), and although his subjects and manners of treatment were usually very different, he strove, particularly in his prose, to achieve as much as he could of Kraus’s leanness and precision.

Kraus even had an indirect influence on his music, for his insistence that there be a *necessity* for every word and comma reinforced habits of mind, formed under Erdmann, according to which Krenek believed that there must be a necessity for every note in a composition. As he had nearly exhausted tonal music, he would soon need to find another means of validating such necessity. But in the months immediately after their meeting and before Krenek had succumbed to his heaviness of heart of the early 1930s, he was still able to compose two final Neoromantic vocal works, using, appropriately enough, poems by Kraus.

The first, *Durch die Nacht* (Through the night, op. 67), composed between December 5, 1930, and January 19, 1931, is a cycle of seven songs with texts taken from Kraus’s *Worte in Versen* (Words in verse [form]). A true masterwork, it far exceeds *Reisebuch* in range and power. With it and such works to come as *Gesänge des späten Jahres* (Songs of the late year, op. 71), *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* (Lamentations of Jeremiah, op. 93), and *Spätlese* (Late harvest, op. 218), one could argue, Krenek attained his highest moments in vocal music. Both the words and music of this cycle are lush and impassioned, which is surprising in view of Kraus’s detestation of Expressionist poetry and any sentimentality or undue opulence. The poems describe a night of loneliness and despair, of longing for an absent lover and intimations of death, of nightmares finally banished by the arrival of dawn and the sight of lilacs blossoming. Barely avoiding self-pity, they hover, as in the second one, “Vor dem Schlaf” (Before sleep), on the verge of just what Kraus censured most fiercely in the works of others:

Da weht mich wieder jene Ahnung an,
ein Federflaum von jenem grossen Grauen,
ein Nichts, genug, um alles doch zu schauen,
was mir von allem Anfang angetan.

Und klopft ans Herz: Du bist in einer Falle,
versuch’s und flich!

Dies hast du doch gemeinsam,
das einzig eine, worin alle einsam,
und keiner will und dennoch müssen alle.

Wer wird in jener Nacht nach diesen Nächten
bei dir sein, um den letzten Streit zu schlichten,
Endgültiges dir helfen zu verrichten,
damit sie dort nicht allzu strenge rechten?

Dies war ein Blick aus dem Dämonenauge,
das mich im Dämmern eingenommen hatte.
So prüft das Leben mich, das nimmermatte,
ob nun ihm zum Widerstand ich taue.

Noch wart ich auf das Wunder.
Nichts ist wahr, und möglich,
dass sich anderes ereignet.
Nicht Gott, nur alles leugn' ich,
was ihn leugnet,
und wenn er will, ist alles wunderbar.

Now old foreboding breathes on me again,
a feather's touch of that gigantic gloom,
a nothing, yet sufficient to illumine
everything that ever was my bane.

And knocks upon my heart: You are caught fast—
try and elude me! This in common only
have you with others, wherein all are lonely,
and no one would, and yet all must at last.

Who shall beyond these nights in that last night
to soothe the final struggle stand beside you,
into the ultimate support and guide you,
that judgment there may not too sternly smite?

This was a glance from out that demon's eye,
that held me stricken in this gloaming eerie.
Thus am I tried by life, the never-weary,
to prove that with it I am fit to vie.

Yet wait I on God's wonder. Nothing's true,
and possible that things may chance without Him.
Nor God I doubt, but all I doubt that doubt Him,
and if He will, all's wonderful and new.

(translated by Albert Bloch)

The stereotypes of the poems—a haunting countenance, an empty darkness, a yearned-for, faraway light, a renewal of hope at the burgeoning of spring—are redeemed by the clarity of the language, the strict regularity and symmetry of the verses, and, in the music, an intensity and luxuriance of imagination. For despite the melancholy subject and the despondency that was threatening Krenek (though it

did not overwhelm him until some months afterward), the songs pulse with creative energy. Perhaps Krenek was stimulated by the thought that Kraus would be pleased with the work. In any case, the music, while it corresponds beautifully with and ennobles the pensive forlornness of the words, has a great sweep and vitality.

Considered without regard to the words, the music of *Durch die Nacht* might seem rather free-floating, as though Krenek had simply relied on a sequence of moods and impulses to see him through. Phrases sometimes reappear, but he did not employ any of the song forms that turn back upon themselves, thereby providing both a frame and a unifying principle. In fact, he applied to these songs the priority he had earlier claimed for opera and organized the music in strict obedience to the structures of the poems. He simply followed the progress of the meanings of his text so that the vocal line continuously unfolds to the end of the poem; the grouping of ideas and images set the pattern for the musical phrasing, the pauses, the placing of cadences. At all points the melodic material is apt and orderly and, in its onward course if not in its overall form, very Schubertian, having great naturalness and ease of movement with, surprisingly, simplicity.

By contrast, the piano part is marked by complexity and nervous excitement as it darts around and through the vocal line. It is an equal partner of great intrinsic interest and not just an accompaniment, though it fulfills that function well, brilliantly complementing the voice and the purport of the text. Indeed, it saves the conventional imagery from insipidness, imbuing it with the *Ursinn* Krenek sought for tonal music. In its harmonic conjunctions the music exceeds the furthest irregularities of *Reisebuch*, and, except with the last song, a listener quickly loses all sense of a preordained key. Nevertheless, one has everywhere a strong impression of tonality, of there being a center of musical gravity, as it were, even if one cannot fix precisely where it is. The cadences, though they do not seem to affirm a particular key, are prominent and definite and consort well with the dividing points in the text. One knows from the music just when a phrase, a sentence, a stanza, or an entire poem has reached its end. Krenek used ingeniously Kraus's conventional and familiar forms, images, ideas, and attitudes as a scaffolding for unusually imaginative and unconventional music that made of the whole something rich, strange, and wonderful.

Die Nachtigall (The nightingale, op. 68), which followed, has many charms but is far less powerful and interesting, even though the Kraus poem that is its text has images and diction more fresh than those of *Durch die Nacht*. Once again Krenek eschewed anything like an ordinary song form and used a continuously unfolding melodic line that follows the progress of the words. But this time the lines and stanzas are irregular and the rhymes intermittent; there is thus no tension between a strict verse pattern and a music without a discernible pattern of its own, such as helped to make *Durch die Nacht* so various and surprising while still so coherent and unified. By comparison *Die Nachtigall* seems bland—ingratiating and mollifying

where *Durch die Nacht* is disquieting and profound. Nevertheless, it, too, shows how far Krenek had moved from *Reisebuch*. What is more, in *Die Nachtigall* he used such wide intervallic leaps and so extended the upper and lower limits of the vocal line that one hears now and then suggestions of the idiosyncratic features of his vocal music after 1950; thus the work has the added interest of foretelling things to come.

Neither *Durch die Nacht* nor *Die Nachtigall* appealed to Kraus on its musical merits, great as these might be, but he did attend the premiere of the first, which took place in Dresden on April 10, 1931, with Krenek himself accompanying the singer, Elisa Stünzner. If he was pleased by the use of his poetry, Kraus did not say so. His only reaction was astonishment that he was not called on to take a bow with the singer and composer. He never referred to the work or the occasion again. He was not interested in Krenek's music; he did not understand it, nor could he be bothered with trying to. His silence, when Krenek so eagerly expected some sign of appreciation of the implied tribute to his poetry, was greatly disappointing to the composer and probably contributed to the depression that he described to Gubler soon afterward.

It was in this period of dejection that Krenek, idly and with no thought that it would lead to anything, took a step that was critical for his music and his life: he began a close study of the twelve-tone technique. He had known about it in a general way since 1924; by that year Schönberg had completed the first work, the Waltz of his *Five Piano Pieces* (op. 23), using the technique, and Erwin Stein's essay "Neue Formprinzipien" (New principles of form), which was the first account of the system to be published, appeared in the August–September issue of *Anbruch* honoring Schönberg on his fiftieth birthday. As was noted earlier, Krenek had infuriated Schönberg with some lighthearted remarks about the technique in 1925. But his interest had gone no further; he rejected Adorno's claim that twelve-tone music was the only kind possible for a composer who wanted order without lifelessness. In 1929 the musicologist H. F. Redlich had tried without success to interest Krenek in Schönberg's one-act opera *Von Heute auf Morgen*, a twelve-tone work that some regarded, at least from its libretto, which Schönberg wrote, as yet another attempt to appeal to the people who had flocked to hear *Jonny*.

One might think, then, that Krenek, having exhausted the possibilities of tonal music, was turning to the technique in order to continue composing, but such was not the case. Discouraged but unable to stop thinking about music, he undertook the study simply as a diversion that appealed to his propensity for analysis. He reread Stein's essay and engaged in a note-by-note scrutiny of Schönberg's Wind Quintet, op. 26, and Berg's *Lyric Suite*. Even if he had been in the good graces of the Schönberg circle, he could not ask them, not even the amiable Berg, about the technique, for they regarded it as their private property and thought knowledge of

it should be restricted to those approved by the master. But at least he could buy their scores and examine them with the same attention he had once given to those of Bartók.²⁴

Schönberg had developed the technique in order to maintain atonal purity by ensuring the equality of all twelve tones. None could be returned to and thus emphasized, which would hint at a “key,” until the other eleven had been heard in the order of their first appearance or some unequivocal variation of it. The twelve tones in their original sequence constituted a row, with which all the notes of a twelve-tone composition must explicitly comport. A tone could be sounded more than once at its point in the row (or variant thereof) provided such repetition did not give it undue emphasis and suggest that it enjoyed superiority over the other eleven. This was not considered to be the same as returning to a note before the series was complete.* Seeking to explain some years later how a row functioned, Krenek wrote:

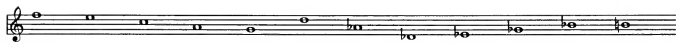
The twelve-tone series which forms the groundwork of composition in the twelve-tone technique has nothing to do with scales. We can best understand its nature and function by thinking of repetition in the old iterative style of the Gregorian chant. Remember that repetition and variation of single melodic elements in the Gregorian chant served to give that type of music coherence and form. The single melodic elements which were thus varied and repeated were not scales at all, but rather “patterns,” or, as we would say today, “basic figures,” . . . [which were] used to give coherence and formal unity to a musical progression.²⁵

Yet as Schönberg and his associates quickly learned, a row offered only a limited number of versions. The limitation was imposed not by the quantity of possible permutations—though these were not infinite—but by the quantity that a composer with an established sensibility and personal style would be likely to conceive or use. Therefore, looking to the example of Gregorian chants, they adopted inversion, retrogression, and transposition as means of producing forty-seven variations of the row all explicitly and logically related to it, so that they had a family of forty-eight rows with the same general features and, so to speak, personality to work with. Inversion meant turning the row upside down. Take, for example, the row used by Berg in 1925–1926 for his *Lyric Suite* (Ex. 1a): inverted, this row is as shown in Ex. 1b; retrogression meant sounding the notes in reverse order, as in Ex. 1c; the retrograde version could itself be inverted (Ex. 1d); and four of these could be transposed eleven times, as Ex. 1e shows for the fundamental row transposed upward one half-step. In theory at least, all forty-eight members of the family were

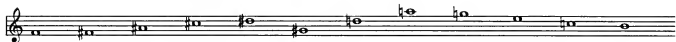
*Such, at least, was the theory. But even at the outset, Schönberg and his circle found that strict adherence often clashed with their sense of what was musical or necessary according to other structural considerations. They thus took to regarding it as a principle from which occasional departures were permissible. Krenek experienced similar difficulties and soon reached the same conclusion.

EXAMPLE 1

(a) The twelve-tone row of Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*.



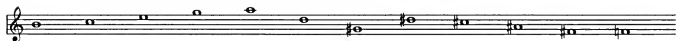
(b) The row of the *Lyric Suite* inverted.



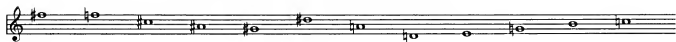
(c) The row of the *Lyric Suite* in reverse order.



(d) The row of the *Lyric Suite* in reverse order and inverted.



(e) The row of the *Lyric Suite* transposed one half-step upward.



available for use in a single work, though with all the other means for variety—time values, octaval shifts, phrasing, dynamics, tempi, timbres, and so forth—only a few were likely to be used, and for some works the four basic versions—row, inverted row, retrograde row, and inverted retrograde row—sufficed.

What did all this mean for the ordinary listener? First, any expectation that keys and harmonic progressions would provide the musical grammar and syntax, thus enabling one to follow the continuity of a work, would be disappointed, and the listener would be compelled to look to other relations among the notes to satisfy the wish for order and expressiveness. Persisting, the listener would become more aware of motivic elements and their development, of the motions and tensions of the polyphony, especially when, as was usually the case with twelve-tone music, it was organized contrapuntally; one would become aware as never before of rhythms, meters, dynamics, and sonorities as *structural* factors. One would not simply by listening be able to recognize the row, except occasionally, and even then the recog-

nition would not necessarily have any particular significance. (That is, the fact that the row was presented in a way that enabled the listener to recognize it would not mean that the composer was saying, in effect, "Hear that? It's the row again. Pay attention because this is important.") From the beginning, Schönberg and his associates insisted that the listener was not expected to recognize the row: that was a matter for the composer. But the listener should sense and respond to the unity and stylistic purity, should feel the concentration and power. Once one had learned to put aside expectations based on long experience with tonality, the ability to apprehend and obtain a unique pleasure from absolute music dissociated from everything outside itself should develop. There would be none of the referential effects and attendant feelings established by convention, just immaculate sound and whatever elation or dismay it by itself gave rise to. Such music would never be popular.

With its precision, its austerity, its purity of motive, and its scorn for ordinary taste and the trend toward *Gemeinschaftsmusik* (music for sociability), it exhibited the qualities that Kraus demanded of writing; hence Claudia Maurer Zenck believes that Kraus's ethical influence played a part in arousing Krenk's interest.²⁶ In any event, Krenk soon had a thorough grasp of the technique as far as it had been taken at this time. And although he had sought only diversion, it was natural for him to want to put some of his new knowledge into use. Thus it was that on November 7, 1931, in his first reference to composing in months, he wrote to Gubler that he was busy with "a new kind of music." It was another song cycle, *Gesänge des späten Jahres* (Songs of the late year, op. 71), one of his supreme achievements. But although it was an immediate response to Krenk's study of the twelve-tone technique and incorporated ideas, it was not written in that mode.

Some years later Krenk remarked that the songs, for which he had written his own text, reflected "a strange sense of impending doom . . . , the consciousness of living upon undermined foundations."²⁷ The libretti are intensely autobiographical, though only two or three lines refer—very cryptically—to anything specific in his outer experience. For this is a record of a journey through a shrouded internal world, just as *Reisebuch* was a record of an actual sunny trip through the Austrian Alps. Where *Reisebuch* was suffused with Krenk's sense of joyful kinship with his fellow Austrians, these new songs emphasize his loneliness and isolation. Cold rain falls, clouds lower and mists gather, night comes on. Happiness belongs to a lost childhood or to a far-off party to which no one knows the way. Lovers seem safe in each other, but autumn comes and they are drawn apart. Over and over the images—of falling leaves, of a distant train whistle receding into the night, of dark corridors and locked doors, of a dimming candle—evoke despair, diminishing vitality, impending death. A fitful hope may rise in a moment of self-delusion ("Let us escape in impetuous flight"), but it is immediately dashed ("Behind us the meaningless Nothing, / before us the invincible spirit's empty triumph!"). Even when one allows for the heightening effect of the symbols, it is clear that Krenk's spirit was terribly

afflicted. His allusion in his letter to Gubler of the previous March of suffering from “spiritual isolation and almost actual physical paralysis” seems not to have been exaggerated.

The cycle begins with a “Wandering Song in the Fall”:

Kalter Regen peitscht die kahle Flur
und fahle Wolken hängen tief herab: Nun is das Ende nah.
Der Weg ist aus, ist auch kein Ziel erreicht,
da hilft kein frommer oder heitrer Trug mehr, und bleibt uns nichts
als unser Wunsch, es möge anders sein, rückgewendet als Erinnerung
an die verlorne Zeit, die uns so schön dünkt, weil wir uns ihrer nicht erinnern.

Cold rain pelts the bare fields
and gray clouds hang low: The end is near.
The path is gone, although no goal was reached,
not pious nor cheerful illusions help anymore, and we have nothing left
except our wish that it might have been otherwise, returning as a memory
of a lost time which seems so beautiful to us because we do not remember it.

Were the sunny days of childhood an illusion, too? No, for when he cries out in the dark, threatened by doom and its demons, he feels the hand of his beloved and knows that they were real. And he knows how terrible is their passing. “Oh bitter song of wandering at the long way’s end far from my goal.”

The poems that follow describe an invisible, imprisoning wall that presses closer on his crumbling house, a shipwreck in which all his hopes and fortunes went down, a moment of hope brought on by wine and quenched by the fall of night, the foretaste of death:

Immer leiser verrinst du, geliebtes Leben,
immer tiefer verzitterst in die unergründliche Höhle des Schlafs. . . .

Verwandelndes Licht vernebelt die einsame Kerze,
ängstlicher tickt auf dem Tisch der wachende Wecker,
trauriger tropft durch die weinende Wand Musik ferne gespielten Klaviers.
Weiss und schnell fliegt durch hohe Wolken der kalte Mond,
bitteres Zeichen hinfliehender Erdenzeit
und sehr ferner Gnade des anderen Reichs.

Ever more softly you flee, beloved life,
ever more deeply vanish into the bottomless pit of sleep. . . .

Transmuting light befogs the lonely candle;
yet more anxiously on the table ticks the waking clock;
more sadly through the weeping wall drops music of a piano played far away.
White and swiftly flies the cold moon through the high clouds,
a bitter symbol of earth’s fleeting time
and the far, far distant mercy of another realm.

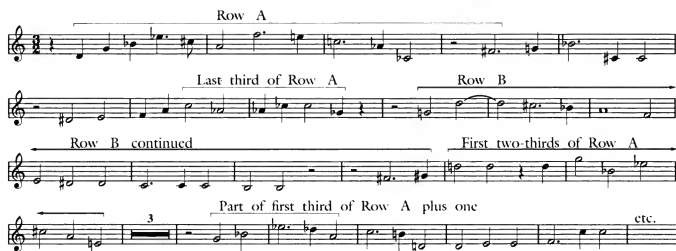
Following this song is a piano interlude entitled "The Instant," which Krenek once identified as the moment of death and later said was "the Kierkegaardian instant between time and eternity when the trombone of Judgment, sounding from far away, announces the unfolding of the infinite."²⁸ The cycle closes with a tenth song, "The Enjoyment of the Infinite," which describes how he may someday reach a place of unfading splendor where all the images of childhood are preserved and the inexhaustible imagination moves serenely, "Light and guiltless like cool glass, / heavy with fullness like the high summers before sin, / endlessly, endlessly, endlessly."

If one discounts the bits of doggerel in *Sprung* and *Kehraus* and the fragments of schoolboy verse and portions of the unfinished masque belonging to the summer of 1917, these songs are Krenek's first venture into poetry, for *Reisebuch* was written not in meters but in pulsing and at times lyrical prose. He used no models, but influences are readily apparent. The lines are unrhymed and of irregular meter. By their length and the curious disposition of their pauses (curious, that is, for verse) they suggest the poetry of Rilke, as does the visionary diction and imagery of the tenth song. Other images bring to mind the Kraus poems of *Durch die Nacht*, and in his notes for a recording of the cycle Krenek himself pointed out the influence of Kraus on the seventh song.

The long fourth song, "The Ballad of the Feast," describes wandering through the endless dark corridors of a vast castle in search of a banquet. Hearing distant sounds, the searchers inquire of a lame and blind passerby, who cannot help them, and wonder if the lord who invited them still waits for their coming or if the feast ended long ago and what they hear fading into the distance is just "an echo wavering in the old hollow space." The irrational dreamscape and the invocation of anxiety and a need to explain and apologize point to the influence of Kafka's tales of loneliness, exclusion, and incomprehensible but inescapable guilt.

What would go unnoticed by most, however, is the influence of German poets writing during the Thirty Years' War. Heinrich Fischer, a member of the Kraus circle, edited a collection of these poets, *Die Vergessenen* (The forgotten), published in 1926, and when Krenek joined the circle he was presented with an inscribed copy. He was strongly affected by the poems of suffering and despair by Johann Klaj (1616–1656), Paul Fleming (1609–1640), and Martin Opitz (1597–1639) in particular, and these influenced both his mood and the diction he chose to express it.²⁹ So deeply was he moved that he used a selection of other poems by these men and one by Andreas Gryphius (1616–1664), also in the collection, for his next work, *Cantata von der Vergänglichkeit des Irdischen* (Cantata on the transitoriness of earthly things, op. 72), his only composition in 1932. (The choice of such texts and the title tell much about his feelings in that year.) Yet, although he took suggestions from all of these sources, the words of the *Gesänge* are uniquely and powerfully his

Tone rows appearing in Krenek's song "Heimatgefühl."



own and indicate an unusual talent and, for a first serious attempt, mastery. And, in spite of the deliberately phantasmic, even surreal, character of the imagery and incidents, the writing, *qua* writing, is as straightforward as Kraus himself could wish.

Well that it was, for the music was the most complex and difficult that Krenek had ever attempted. It ranges from passages of the plainest tonality and triadic harmony through dense and perplexing chromaticism that teases the listener with hints of cadences to stark atonality. Krenek had taken the concept of the row and imposed on it the idiosyncrasies of *Durch die Nacht*, and in so doing had far surpassed the limits reached in the earlier work. He repeatedly used sequences in which no tone reappeared until the other eleven had been heard, but he did not confine himself to a single row and its variants, nor did he hesitate to introduce sequences that were not even portions of rows. Thus, for example, in the vocal line of the fifth song, "Heimatgefühl" (Longing for home), he moved through one series after another with passages between which might be fragments of a row or might just as well have no relation (Ex. 2). Elsewhere, as in the seventh song, "Liebeslied" (Love song), a series might be iterated as many as four times (with the accompaniment developing another, complementary series of its own) before any new material appeared.

The effect is one of melodious sequences that do not constitute true melodies. By using "rows" as he did, Krenek avoided banality and lifelessness, but without the unifying principles of true twelve-tone music he risked incoherence and unintelligibility. An attentive listener, however, soon realizes that the music is proceeding according to a principle of its own: Krenek put into effect the ideas about the relationship of words and music that he had broached in the notes on opera he wrote for the theater in Kassel, and he deployed his musical materials in close conformity with the tenor and syntax of his poetry. For example, in the midst of

discordant atonality appropriate to the somberness of the cycle, an enticing and winsome tonality is used to refer to the happiness of childhood.

To be sure, composers of songs and operas have always tried to match the words and music, but only in a fairly broad way that allows the conventions of both musical and linguistic forms to be accommodated. Often the latter are distorted, sometimes, greatly, for the sake of the former because the music enjoys the first priority. This, Krenek had argued, was wrong for opera, since music is only an element contributing to the *dramatic* effect of the whole, which depends more on the words and the acting. Now in *Gesänge*, though this was a song cycle and not an opera, he went a step further: the words were not simply more important, they were preeminent. Their conventions were used to organize the music, which adhered strictly to the structures and meanings of the text.

Indeed, to speak of “songs” is somewhat misleading, for in a way these are more nearly poetry readings intensified by music but retaining the essential properties of discourse. Yet for all that, the artistic force and merit are no less than they might have been if Krenek had somewhat compromised his text to give space here and there for mainly musical considerations. (He did allow for *purely* musical considerations, untrammelled by words, in the piano interlude before the final song.) In fact, musical interests are not diminished but newly defined, and the musical-verbal entity, the organic work of art, is a truly unique thing-in-itself of exceptional power and appeal. *Gesänge des späten Jahres* surpasses even the splendid *Durch die Nacht*. Though subordinate to the text, the musical details are more brilliant, the structures more charged with expressive tension. And Krenek’s verses, while not truly profound when taken by themselves, are more comprehensive and significant with regard to human experience than those he chose from Kraus, and the work as a whole is more passionate. In all, the cycle has an amplitude and majesty of high genius. Among the works that Krenek had thus far created, only the Second Symphony and *Leben des Orest*—both of a much larger scale—could be compared with it.

The last song was finished in Vienna on December 27, 1931, bringing to a close a dolorous but critical year. Before the end Krenek had recovered some of his spirits along with his creative drive. On November 26 he had listened to Adorno’s radio talk about his music, which lifted his heart. As he told Gubler, he had never heard, except for a few words during their last meeting from Gubler himself, such a strong and convincing statement concerning the merits of his music, and he was reassured that what he had done was not in vain. What made Adorno’s evaluation all the more persuasive was the fact that Adorno had no idea Krenek would hear him. Thus bolstered, Krenek could face the issue so long postponed:

Now to the central question, of which I must finally speak. You may reject my reasons . . . , but I think you will respect and understand them. I cannot and may

not come soon to Frankfurt for a lasting stay. I hope to be able to come often as a visitor and to be so permitted. You know that I suffer from a certain geographic fixation. I have now made up my mind to lead in Vienna the life I have wanted here, calculated here. This has already cost me much energy and sacrifice, and I do not wish to abandon these efforts now that certain first successes are showing. It is true, alas, that I encounter almost everywhere else, especially in Frankfurt, almost without effort on my part, the atmosphere that is so necessary to me and that I very seriously lack here.

He was probably comparing the support he received from Gubler and Adorno with the indifference of Kraus and the courteous remoteness of Berg. "However," he continued,

I want and for once in my life must attempt to create this atmosphere from within. The attempt to actualize it is almost as necessary for me as the thing itself. For that reason I have to struggle with inner inhibitions, and that alone stimulates me to undertake it, because if only the external difficulties of this vexatious locality stood in the way, then perhaps I might abandon the effort as not rewarding. However, it is precisely the challenge set forth in the development of my social, so to speak relational, problems that I must seek to overcome and ought not to escape. . . . I must seek now to create a circle, an atmosphere, by myself out of a circumstance that is my own. . . . The fact that I wish to do this here, where I feel I belong, where I feel the obligation to be one transmitted by the city and by forebears, and where it constantly faces the most overwhelming opposition, simply makes my imprisonment in this attempt more confining. Yet time is working for me, and I must learn to be patient. Meanwhile, I cannot and do not want to be tied externally to another field of force as well. And I perceive my participation in your endeavors in just that way: you have sought me and I have been effective there because I am a special power in a wholly different place, psychological and geographical; and so it comes around again to my local field. Here, as there, I must provide my own authority and not live to sit in the middle and be one of a number. The purely personal opportunity to stand in a more intimate relation with you is something else. I do not need to explain that this [relation] is as essential to me as air to breathe; my letters are proof enough. Yet today I do not feel entitled to yield lightly to the desire for the easier satisfaction of such a need.

He admitted that he was fearful of coming closer to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, for this would mean becoming more involved in its affairs. Inconvenient as it was, the distance between Frankfurt and Vienna seemed right for him, and he counted on Gubler's friendship in understanding how this was so.³⁰

Behind Krenek's circumlocutions was the fact that, despite his words about opposition, he was seeing new opportunities in Vienna. One of these (which made his remarks about fearing entanglement in the affairs of Gubler's paper seem like special pleading) was a plan to launch a new magazine with Willi Reich, a musicologist who was presently supporting himself as a pharmacist but in time would make a name for himself with a biography of Berg, with whom he had studied composi-

tion. The magazine, called simply 23 after the number of a press regulation mandating that anyone could demand a printed correction of an error published in a newspaper, was supposed to rectify misinterpretations of music in the Viennese journals. This goal naturally suggested using *Die Fackel* as a model, a bit of presumptuousness that annoyed Kraus, although uncharacteristically he raised no serious objection. Berg, however, did, even though he had proposed the magazine and its name in the first place. Yet he disliked the close resemblance with *Die Fackel*, and after contributing a few anonymous paragraphs he ceased to have anything to do with 23, although he continued to approve of its objectives. That left most of the writing to Krenek, an associate named Rudolph Ploderer, and Reich, who served as chief editor and publisher. They used numbers instead of names and sought to give the impression that there were twenty-three contributors. In time they did get a few pieces from Schnabel, Joseph Roth (on Krenek), and Adorno. Even when they did it all themselves, the writing task was not onerous, for each issue was small. (The first number had sixteen pages; the last three, which were published together, had a total of forty-eight.) Printings, too, were small—about two hundred copies—which kept costs low. This was just as well, because the magazine always lost money. Reich made up the difference out of his own pocket.

The first number appeared early in January 1932. Much of it was devoted to listing the errors of fact and judgment of Julius Korngold (contemptuously called “Onkel” [Uncle] Julius), the music critic of Vienna’s *Neue Freie Presse* and the implacable enemy of all but the most bland contemporary music. In the course of satirical remarks on how Korngold used to advantage his power over boards of directors and organizers of concerts, the editors reprinted a twenty-year-old comment that accused him of pushing the career of his son Erich, whose pantomime *Der Schneemann* (The snowman) was performed at the Vienna Court Opera in 1910 when Erich was only thirteen years old. (He was eleven when he composed it.) Onkel Julius promptly sued Reich, thereby attracting much-needed attention to the new publication. Sold on newsstands, it was read by composers, critics, and those wishing to be *au courant*, and it was widely talked about even though sales were small. It was just the thing to bring out Krenek’s comic spirit, which for so long had been almost lost from view, and he got much amusement from igniting firecrackers under the guardians of musical decorum. He also wrote serious appreciations of Kraus, Schönberg, and Berg, and a warning against the Austrian admirers of the Nazis. Korngold’s suit dragged on into the spring of 1933. Reich was acquitted but forced to publish a retraction. Krenek argued that he should refuse to do so and fight the case, but Reich could not afford to. After Berg’s death on Christmas Eve 1935, Reich began to lose heart. Four more numbers were published, one of them devoted to articles in memory of Berg, then Reich gave his attention wholly to the biography of his mentor and the magazine came to an end, appearing for the last time in the fall of 1937. Erich Korngold, it should be noted, was unscathed. In

1932, while the uproar over his father was going on, he was named in a poll conducted by a Vienna newspaper (not his father's) one of the two greatest living composers. The other was Schönberg!*

. . . .

By the early summer of 1932 Krenek had fully recovered from the spiritual paralysis that had so afflicted him. He still suffered from periods of depression brought on by such things as the failure of writers to mention him when speaking of contemporary opera. It rankled him to see so often the names of Hindemith and Weill but never his own, not even in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Nevertheless, he had abandoned thoughts of another profession and was hard at work on a major project into which he would put all he had taught himself about the use of rows and his now-intense concern over protecting Austria and her ancient values from the Nazis. Sustained by Gubler and stimulated by Kraus, he had found a new direction and followed it out of the dismay and doubts that almost put an end to his composing.

Ironically, his discipleship under Kraus nearly cost him the friendship of Gubler.³¹ A few months after deciding he should not accept a position on the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Krenek sent Gubler a clipping from *Die Fackel* in which Kraus said that advertising infects editorial decisions and cited the printing by the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of travel advertisements on the page devoted to travel essays. He offered as an example of misconduct a piece on which, as it happened, Gubler himself had worked with the writer and cartographer. As if sending the clipping were not bad enough, Krenek explained that as he had adopted as his own the principles set forth in *Die Fackel*, he must apply them to himself; he therefore asked that an essay he had written for the paper about the Waldviertel, a forested area in northern Austria, be returned to him because it was scheduled for publication on the travel page and he could not tolerate the thought that he might be serving commercial ends. He had, he said, decided on this course before he had seen the entry in *Die Fackel*, and he had not consulted Kraus. He added that he exempted the literary page from any such taint.

The disclaimer did not help. Gubler was deeply insulted and in a few days replied icily that editors of the paper were absolutely free in choosing what they would print. Kraus's remarks were an "indecent and malicious defamation" of his character. In Gubler's opinion, Krenek, who a short time earlier had reported that he was seeing a great deal of Kraus, was too much under his influence. "I am particularly shocked and rather sad," he concluded, "that the bases of our friendship were not so solid but that a black-magical hell beetle of Krausian shape could casually bring it about that you and I should become entangled in such a superfluous correspondence."

*Other honors came his way. He won Oscars for his scores for the movies *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *Anthony Adverse* and is remembered even today as a composer of superior film music. He died in 1957.

Now it was Krenek's turn to be insulted. Perhaps, he suggested, Gubler regarded *all* of their correspondence as superfluous, precious though it was to himself. Anyway, he was not interested in any "mutual settling of accounts of pettiness and painfulness." He was surprised by Gubler's overreaction, which he declined to take as an "unceremonial dismissal" of their friendship. Still, he wanted his essay returned.

Several weeks passed before Gubler replied. When he did it was to say that he despaired of making Krenek see "in what a remarkable manner you have been totally entangled in the net of this man." Krenek's manner in presenting his views followed Kraus's polemical style, and his conclusion was "falsely established." But he wished to have no more to do with the matter, and he ended graciously: "With a precision uniquely its own, your letter is dear to me in spite of the sharpness and sarcasms." To this Krenek replied that he was glad they now understood each other. He closed with an invitation to Gubler to visit him in his new quarters at 6 Mühlbachergasse, an apartment close to the Schönbrunn Palace and not far from where he and Berta had been living since settling in Vienna.

The friendship had survived, but it was never again as close as it had been before this unhappy exchange. Gubler continued to admire Krenek's music and writing, and they exchanged letters and occasionally met. Krenek contributed a few more book reviews and one brief, undistinguished article, but his work for the paper (though not his essay writing) was over. In the fall of 1933 Gubler left Frankfurt and joined the staff of the *Vossische Zeitung*, a Berlin paper of liberal views, great respectability, but limited readership. At his invitation Krenek contributed two book reviews and a synopsis of Krenek's next stage work, *Karl V*. Then on New Year's Day Gubler was fired by the Nazis, who had come to full power the previous March. He returned to Winterthur, gave up journalism altogether, and began the study of law, in which he enjoyed brilliant success and international eminence until his death in 1956. Krenek never had a more loyal friend of his own generation.

7 · KARL V AND CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

Early in 1929, the conductor Clemens Krauss, who was leaving the staff of the Frankfurt State Opera to become head of the Vienna State Opera, wrote to Krenek saying that he hoped that when he had settled into his new post he and Krenek might become better acquainted. Then, after he was installed, Krauss got the idea of inviting young Austrian composers to create operas for his company. Because he had no money to offer as outright commissions, anything they came up with would have to win acceptance in the usual way, but even so such an expression of interest in new works by the head of one of the most conservative opera houses in Europe was remarkable. Since Krenek was by far the best known and, with the popularity of *Jonny*, the one whose work seemed most likely to gain public support for Krauss's idea, Krauss approached him toward the end of September 1930, when Krenek was coming to understand that *Kehraus* would likely not be produced. Seeing the opportunity as an honor and pleased that he would be free to choose the subject and his own librettist, Krenek decided to accept Krauss's invitation and to prepare his own text using material from the life of Karl V (1500–1558), a Holy Roman Emperor whose domain had included Austria.

A man who, in his pensive, rather somber nature, resembled Max, the king in *The Secret Kingdom*, Thoas, and Krenek himself, Karl had fascinated Krenek since his days at the *Gymnasium*. And although Karl's life seemed almost immediately to have important philosophical and political implications, it was Karl's personality and not these implications that first drew Krenek to this subject.¹ Soon, however, he saw aspects relevant to his increasing interest in traditional Austrian ways and values, his concern over the aggressive nationalism of the Nazis, and his preference for patrician manners and culture.

To learn more about the emperor, Krenek went to the National Library in Vienna,

where the papers of the Habsburg family, of which Karl was a member, were housed. It was not easy to examine them; permission had to be obtained from a number of officials. But with the help of Dr. Josef Gregor of the library staff Krenk was able to study many of them, including Karl's daybook, in which the emperor kept an intermittent account of his meditations. All in all, though, there was such a profusion of manuscript material that, apart from seeing with his own eyes imperial documents of the greatest importance in their day, Krenk actually gained little from it but confusion.

To focus his studies he turned to histories of Europe and the Holy Roman Empire during the years of Karl's reign and, through the first half of 1931, even when his spirits were at their lowest and he wondered if he should change his vocation, pored over histories and state documents. He took notes on nationalist movements in Germany at the time of the Reformation; the imprisonment of Karl's quondam enemy, Francis I of France; the sacking of Rome by Karl's troops; Karl's correspondence; his abdication and retirement to a monastery in Spain; the intrigues of the Jesuits; and finally his death. He was much influenced in his views of Karl's life by *La défense de l'occident* (1925) by the French monarchist Henri Massis, which Krenk read in a translation by Georg Moenius entitled *Verteidigung des Abendlandes*, published in 1930. According to Massis, who despised rationalism and egalitarianism, the downfall of true civilization, which was embodied in the "Latin inheritance" of the Holy Roman Empire, began with the Reformation. Today a further degradation was being sought by Germany as reprisal for its defeat in 1918. Only France could recover some measure of that civilization, and Massis prayed for the return of French culture as it had been before the depredations of Renan and Anatole France. Massis's claims for the Latin inheritance impressed Krenk, who perceived a parallel between France and Austria, where, he believed, some of that inheritance still lingered—and was being menaced by Germany. As he sketched a libretto about Karl's struggles to preserve his empire against German Protestant nationalists led by Martin Luther, he saw many significant similarities with political events of the day.²

Throughout the autumn of 1931, as his spirits slowly lifted and his self-confidence seeped back in, Krenk worked on the libretto desultorily, laying it aside to compose the *Gesänge*. In the excitement generated by meeting the challenges of what he had called "a new kind of music," this proved to be not so much a delay as a stimulus. Then he heard Adorno's praise of his music on the radio and two days later wrote the letter telling Gubler that he had resolved to stay in Vienna and meet his commitments there—of which, clearly, completing the opera for Krauss was one. By the time he completed the *Gesänge* in the final days of 1931, he was ready to work determinedly on the libretto, and he had greatly extended his purpose. He would not just create an opera: he would defend supranational Christian humanism against Hitler and German nationalism. In so doing he would be defending his

now-beloved land, not in the interests of Austrian nationalism, but because in this remnant of Karl's empire beliefs and customs of that humanism still held that might once more form the basis of a civilized and peaceful international community. He had recently said in his lecture "The Freedom of the Human Spirit" that politically neutral art was impossible, and now he would use his own art on behalf of Austria and its traditions.

The idea of a Christian humanist state was not new. In the 1880s Karl von Vogelsang, a founder of Austria's Christian Social party, had called for the establishment of a Christian *Ständestaat*: a traditional, hierarchical society dominated by the Catholic church. In his view, church and state were simply aspects of one monolith. "Liberalism as the principle of the autonomous individual," he wrote, "is the very antithesis of the homogenous society which is dependent upon God, obeys Him, and accepts the organic principle. . . . Excessive emphasis upon selfish considerations in man's action and a ruthless struggle for existence are the inevitable consequences of a liberalism which makes subjectivism the foundation of thought, of law, of human freedom."³

By the time Krenek was planning his opera it had long been claimed by the Christian Social party that it stood for the universality of Catholic Christendom and the old empire against the uncouth nationalism of Lutheran Germany. The myth had grown up within the party that after the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire Austria had taken on the mission of uniting the smaller nations of Central Europe. But the mission had failed because of these nations' unrelenting hostility toward Austria and one another, which drove them into constant rebellion against the Habsburgs and, after the defeat of the Central Powers, eager pursuit of independence. Nevertheless, so went the myth, Austria was destined to maintain a supranational Christian community among the lands that had once made up the empire.

The character of this community was much discussed by Austrian Catholics during the twenties, when *The True State* (1921), a criticism of democracy and liberalism by Othmar Spann, had wide influence. Society, Spann wrote, could be organized in only two ways, the individualistic or the universalistic. The first produced a conglomeration of contentious self-seekers; the second, a union of people sharing a common good under God's law and the wisdom of Christian tradition. Chancellor Ignaz Seipel argued in 1929, when his second term in office ended, for the establishment of the *Ständestaat* on the grounds that Catholics could no longer support the impious republic. He, too, invoked Austria's mission, which would be undertaken, he said, once the government had been reformed.

Any influence that Seipel and Spann may have had on Krenek was indirect, the result of their ideas being by now common currency. He did not think particularly well of Seipel as a leader, and he had not read Spann's book. Nor had he yet read *Österreichische Aktion* (Austrian action), a collection of monarchist essays edited in 1926 by Ernst Karl Winter (who would later become an esteemed friend). Inspired

by the writings of the royalist Charles Maurras, the fiery leader of Action Française, Winter's book and the Austrian intellectuals for which it spoke stood for an alliance of throne and proletariat against the evils of political and economic liberalism; they contended that democracy destroyed legitimate authority and created governments that pretended to govern for the common good while actually serving the interests of industrialists and businessmen.

In time Krenek would join Winter's circle and share many of his views, but at the moment he was unaffected by them, much as they resembled those he was formulating for himself. What did influence him besides Massis's *Défense* were the essays of Joseph Roth, with whom Krenek felt such a strong affinity. Roth had recently published *Radetzky marsch* (Radetzky march, 1932), a bittersweet novel set in imperial Austria-Hungary. Though a progressive on matters of human rights, Roth was captivated by the mystique of the empire and believed that a pious aristocracy was more likely to nurture a high culture and the good of the people than politicians dependent on patrons interested mainly in gain and ostentation. But still greater influences on Krenek were Kraus's attacks on the Social Democrats and the liberal press, which, he maintained, abetted rather than exposed the abuses of democracy, and his return to Catholicism, which he deemed the one bulwark likely to be effective against the Nazis. The impress of both men, different as they were—Kraus so savage and assertive, Roth so gentle and diffident—was conspicuous in the letters to Gubler in which Krenek railed against the crudity of the rich and expressed his own nostalgia for the empire and its refinements.

His first mention of Christian humanism as a deterrent to what he called "the barbarities of the newest movements" came in a letter to his friend written on August 5, 1932. "Perhaps," he wrote, "we shall remember that we are a Christian-Catholic nation too strong to sink into oblivion. Perhaps this idea might have saved us after all and we would have today a humane apostolic realm had not so-called liberalism come among us with its aiding and abetting of nationalism."⁴ It is clear from two essays, "Von der Aufgabe, ein Österreicher zu sein" (On the task of being an Austrian), published in the April 1931 issue of the Viennese periodical *Die Freyung*, and "Wiens geistige Situation" (Vienna's spiritual situation), published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on July 19 of the same year, that he had been thinking for some time about the Austrian mission and the establishment of a borderless empire of humane spirits, with Vienna as its capital.⁵ But for all his affinity with Roth and later with Winter, for all his belief that the monarchy had served people well by giving them a focus for their loyalties, he never joined a monarchist group or said Christian humanism might entail the restoration of Habsburg rule. His "empire" was a spiritual condition, not a goal for political action.

What did Krenek mean by ancient Austrian traditions? What, besides territorial possessions and the authority of the church, had Karl V been defending? What would Christian humanism bring back? From his studies Krenek had formed a

vision of a unified world going back to Charlemagne and even beyond, one in which the emperor had been a political executive acting under the authority of the pope on behalf of ultimately spiritual goals. He knew well that his vision was nearer to fiction than to historical fact; yet it embodied an ideal that he was convinced might still be realized in Austria and then perhaps the world: one of a free, pluralistic society in which shared inherited beliefs gave order and meaning to individual lives. Such a society would certainly be conservative, but it could not exclude the radical, for each, as he said in a partial summary of his ideas published in 1934, required the other to remain vital.

The radical, as a spiritual element, represents an unavoidable complement of true conservatism, without which it must become sterile. On the other hand, the radical position requires the established ground, which the conservative offers, if it is not to degenerate into planless, remote-from-reality wandering and mindless oppositional exertions. Without the inclusion of radical thought our conservatism could all too easily lose itself in unintellectual cultivation of the traditional; it is precisely this bland glossing over in a shallow traditionalism that can drive many radical people into an opposition in which they do not at all want to be. Nevertheless, conservatism . . . need not fear them; on the contrary, oriented toward the true, eternal religious foundation pillar that it would have to offer them, they would bring to it exactly that measure of vigorous sap which is indispensably necessary for the conserving of the good that is worthy of preservation. Therefore, true conservatism is not senile rigidity but an ever-renewed living relation.⁶

In a society of such mutually beneficial relationships there would be richness, tolerance, structure without rigidity or excess of authority, dignity without imperiousness—qualities of Austrian life that went back, he believed, to the past, especially the Baroque period, when this life had reached its peak of refinement. His espousal of his vision was more emotional than intellectual, and, as he himself remarked many years afterward, he tended to exaggerate some aspects of Austrian life because as the son of immigrants he wanted so much to believe in them.⁷ He could not take them for granted in the easygoing way of those whose forebears had always been Austrians. By the time he was ready to begin work on the music of his opera he felt an urgency such as he had never experienced before. Formidable difficulties lay before him, but he was charged with energy and determination—and this only a year after he had thought so seriously of changing careers!

. . .

He began composing early in July 1932 at Velden in Carinthia and almost immediately reported to Gubler that the work was extremely intense and difficult. The myriad events of the life of Karl V far exceeded the scope of an opera. Yet simply to represent the highlights would produce a series of fragments lacking the unity essential to a stage work. To get around this problem Krenek adopted a simple but

effective device: he showed Karl at the end of his life seeking to justify his actions in highlights to his confessor. The coherence of his defense would draw together the discrete elements, and the exchange between the two men would enable Krenek to advance his ideas about the threat of German nationalism to supranational Christian humanism, for which Karl's life would provide illustrations. To link ideas with actions Krenek followed the example of *Christophe Colomb*, by Paul Claudel and Darius Milhaud, in which the stage was divided to allow action to take place in one area and comment on it to be offered in another. Completed in 1928, this opera had received its premiere at the Berlin State Opera House on May 5, 1930, and was an immediate sensation. Milhaud had sought to extend the range of opera by techniques based on the Greek chorus and the editing of films, and critics and audiences at once recognized that he had created what amounted to a new suborder of the genre. Writing in 1935, Krenek called it a work of the highest significance that, to give form to a historical subject, had introduced new dimensions in the relationship between words and music. Once he decided to use the divided stage himself, he too studied carefully films and their use of time shifts, flashbacks, the interweaving of events, and similar tactics for juxtaposing details for emphasis and thematic rather than chronological continuity. But despite his familiarity with the classics he did not give thought to the Greek chorus, which, he said later, had no influence on his handling of his materials.⁸

Now it became a matter of choosing the events in Karl's crowded and colorful life that best illustrated his character, his imperial responsibilities, and Krenek's ideas about a Christian humanist society, and of providing the commentary to tie all this together. Moreover, as the action, *qua* action, was so disjunctive, Krenek concluded that he could not use ordinary closed operatic forms such as arias for the music.* Yet for artistry and for dramatic nuances and intensities it would have to have its own continuum. Speaking on April 19, 1936, at the ISCM festival in Barcelona, where three fragments from the opera were performed, he described his confrontation with this problem:

Much is begun, but only a little brought to provisional completion. Therein may be seen a basic conformity with the innermost meaning of the dramatic material itself: the life and works of Karl V constitute a unique fragment, a vast but incomplete and truly incompletable conception. . . . Needless to say that in composing I did not intend to produce fragments . . . but simply the dramatic design . . . as it developed with compelling necessity from the nature of the material. . . . Because the loose, fragmentary character of the overall formal plan was a precondition, it seemed especially necessary to establish firmly a structural uniformity of the elements. The uninterrupted tonal material such as I had used on principle in my middle period of the "Restoration of the Primal Meaning" (*Leben des Orest, Reisebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen*)

*Hence he dubbed *Karl V* not an opera but "a stage work with music"; from the start, however, virtually everyone called it simply an opera, and soon Krenek stopped trying to make the distinction and called it an opera too.

might perhaps guarantee such uniformity, yet at that point it did not come into consideration, [while] the drastically winnowed tonality as shown here and there in *Gesänge des späten Jahres* did not seem to me to offer enough structural surety for such a voluminous project. Therefore I turned for the first time to the twelve-tone technique.⁹

It was an act of supreme importance for Krenek's life and music. Although he had already given many hours to familiarizing himself with the technique and had used rows in *Gesänge*; although he had admired the purity of the twelve-tone works of Schönberg, Webern, and Berg, until now he had not thought twelve-tone music capable of evoking an immediate, instinctive response such as he needed for many key sections of his opera.¹⁰ Using rows to generate material for his song cycle was one thing, but organizing an entire composition according to the technique had been associated in his mind with "Middle European gloominess" (he was thinking in particular of Schönberg's moods), and he much preferred the vivacity of the French people and Les Six. More to the point, since vivacity was scarcely an attribute of the materials he was planning to use, he had supposed that the technique could not be used in conjunction with a positive view of life such as that implicit in his social message. Now, however, he was persuaded that the technique would make possible the integration he required, even though he did not yet know enough about it to derive not just musical ideas, as with *Gesänge*, but musical structures for a work as immense as he projected. Nevertheless, he pushed forward, learning as he went and maintaining diagrams and indices to keep track of motivic elements and cross-relations. It was very slow work.

Because Krenek was to use the twelve-tone technique and variations of it for the rest of his musical life, thereby earning international recognition as a leading twelve-tone composer, it is important to understand how he reached his decision. He did not suddenly say to himself, "Now I shall become a twelve-tone composer." He wanted only to deal with the problems at hand, and he concluded—very gradually—that the technique offered him the way. At the moment, he was not looking beyond *Karl V*, although once he had determined his course he was pleased that his first venture with the technique was being undertaken in a truly major work.¹¹ Then, as he responded to the excitement of the challenge, and as he realized the expressive power and freedom that, by their sheer number, his new resources gave him, while at the same time guaranteeing order and an Erdmannian necessity for every note, he made a wholly deliberate commitment to the technique, not just for *Karl V* but for all other works he might compose in the foreseeable future. Only now did he, as it were, say to himself, "I shall be a twelve-tone composer." He was well aware that this was truly a new beginning in his musical and personal life. Not many months earlier he had wondered if he should take up a new profession; with this commitment he had in effect done just that.

Given the almost universal rejection of twelve-tone music, which was commonly

regarded as the most extreme form of modernism and aroused unusual irritation on the rare occasions when it was heard outside private concerts of the Schönberg circle, Krenek's decision could be interpreted as a gesture of defiance, of willfully setting oneself against the community, of purposefully electing to be an outsider. As was remarked earlier, Krenek had experienced an aversion to modernism and had wanted to reach out to audiences with music they could understand and enjoy. Yet here he was, paradoxically, using a mode likely to offend listeners, for a work that was intended to celebrate tradition, the authority of the church, and the peaceful fellowship of man and to deplore obstinate individualism such as that of Karl's great antagonist, Luther. Since Krenek knew perfectly well how most listeners felt about twelve-tone music, using it for this work seemed to require an explanation. What Krenek offered was not very persuasive. "I spent much intellectual effort on constructing a sort of mystical affinity between the *philosophia perennis* of the Aquinate and the universalism of the dodecaphonic organization," he wrote some years later, adding that he thought twelve-tone music offered an analogue of Christian humanism, since both provided freedom under order, diversity within unity.¹² With its allusion to Saint Thomas Aquinas this statement has a fine scholarly aroma, but it is difficult to take seriously when one remembers that Krenek had been trying to solve specific compositional problems, not metaphysical ones.

More significant than any putative parallels with medieval thought were the writings of and atmosphere surrounding Karl Kraus, who knew nothing about twelve-tone music except that he detested it. Nevertheless, the music had features that Kraus demanded of writing and had taught Krenek to admire: strict syntactical rules meticulously observed, attention to the most minute details, austerity, logic, and rigorous order. Moreover, Kraus tied the laws of language to moral principles; violating those laws was a sign of an immoral nature. Krenek thus began to think of strict adherence to the laws of twelve-tone music, especially given the temptation to succumb to the wishes of the audience, as a moral act. Here, rather than in a possible mystical affinity, might be found a reason to use this music in a work treating major social and ethical conflicts.

Krenek also perceived a resemblance between Kraus and Schönberg in their refusal to compromise. In an article about the two men that he wrote for 23 after his own use of the twelve-tone technique had come under heavy attack, he defended Schönberg in terms that he must have hoped applied in a measure to himself as he put his career at risk.

One can see a moral achievement in the self-sacrificing way a composer sticks to a course he has seen as necessary, in his absolutely uncompromising consistency, which defies all obstacles. . . . One can see that experiencing opposition in his artistic course, which made Schönberg's moral force ever stronger and more manifest, gradually became the stuff of his work. . . . So the moral and aesthetic spheres worked together

more and more, while the moral intransigence, originally deriving from the need to stick to his aesthetic guns, now became their justification.¹³

Music, by itself, could not make moral statements, and no system of music was inherently good or bad. Morality became an issue only when a composer compromised his vision to propitiate the audience. Tonal music was not moral or immoral, but Krenek's continuing to use it after the attempt to recover its *Ursinn* had ultimately failed would have been compromising, would have been immoral.¹⁴ In adopting the twelve-tone technique and struggling to understand and obey its laws, Krenek was exhibiting the qualities he most admired in Kraus—including, one cannot avoid thinking, disdain for the common man, who had so liked the catchy tonal music of *Jonny*. Still, in view of the effort and the risks involved, Krenek was entitled to feel a bit valiant. Undoubtedly the venture was good for his morale.

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Karl V was finished on May 24, 1933. In the meantime, dire things had been happening at home and abroad. Hitler had been named chancellor of Germany on January 30. To meet the economic crises confronting Austria and cope with threats of violence from the Schutzbund, and particularly the Austrian Nazis, Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, who had headed a coalition government since the spring of 1932, suspended parliamentary government on March 4. On March 5, the Nazis gained control of the German Reichstag. The next day, Krenek's innocuous *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit* (Triumph of feeling), an orchestral suite based on incidental music he had composed for a production at Kassel of Goethe's play of the same name, was withdrawn from performance at Mannheim to avoid offending them. On March 29, Austrian Nazis rioted in Vienna. All this gave Krenek momentary concern lest his opera be up against forces so great that it would fail to have the effect he hoped for it, but he kept on working. For one thing, Clemens Krauss had been enthusiastic when Krenek played some of the music for him in December and had said he was officially accepting it then and there, though Krenek urged him to wait until he had the whole work before him.¹⁵

The outlook was not encouraging. Trying to arouse interest in the opera (and to make explicit its political thesis), Krenek wrote a short essay, "Mein neues Bühnenwerk" (My new stage work), published in the *Neue Wiener Tagblatt* on June 18, 1933, in which he explained that *Karl V* would show how nationalism had been awakened among the nations of the Holy Roman Empire by the Reformation and how "the noble idea of Catholic-universal humanism, dislodged from the secular state, passed on to *Austria* [Krenek's italics] as a precious heritage, where . . . even today it lives unextinguished. . . . If I could contribute to the strengthening of this truly Austrian conception, now aroused to new life," he added, "it would be the greatest satisfaction to me."

He had abundant material. Karl V was born in Ghent in 1500 and died in 1558 at the monastery of San Jerónimo de Yuste, near Plasencia in western Spain. A member of both the Austrian House of Habsburg and the Spanish royal family, he became king of Spain in 1516 on the death of his maternal grandfather, Ferdinand, and was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519, following the death of his paternal grandfather, Maximilian I. The Reformation was under way, and in 1521 the young emperor convened the Diet of Worms, at which Martin Luther defended his conduct. Afterward, Karl issued the Edict of Worms, outlawing Luther and his followers. Henceforth his rule was spent in struggles to preserve the empire against separatist efforts by both the Catholic French and the Protestant Germans; an invasion by the Turks under Suleiman I, who reached the outskirts of Vienna in 1529 before Karl forced him to retreat in 1532; and the political and military maneuvers of Pope Clement VII, who felt his power endangered by Karl's might. Exhausted by a series of setbacks culminating in 1555 in the Peace of Augsburg, which gave Protestants equal rights with Catholics, Karl in 1556 transferred the imperial crown to his brother, Ferdinand, and the throne of Spain to Philip II. A year later he retired to the monastery where he died. His empire was diminished at his life's end, and Europe was divided among religious and nationalistic factions that warred ceaselessly and made impossible henceforth the unity he had dreamed of.

The opera begins with Karl's receiving word at the monastery that the electors have approved his relinquishing his imperial powers, whereupon the Voice of God speaks to him from Titian's painting *The Last Judgment* (also known as *La Gloria*), which in the manner of the day shows Karl praying for salvation, and declares that he will be judged on how well he performed his duty of uniting the world under the sign of Christ. Karl wonders, "After a life of hardship am I not justified in making the house of prayer my last abode, devoting my days to meditation? Or did I fail in my imperial duties?"¹⁶ He calls for his confessor, the young monk Juan de Regla, and tells him that he wishes to review his life. Starting with a scene from Karl's boyhood in Brussels, they move back and forth in time, returning after each event to 1558 for questions from Juan and explanations from Karl. (They are seated on one part of the stage, while the events that Karl recalls are enacted on another.) Krenk later pointed out that the questions he put into the mouth of the young monk were those that would be asked by a modern audience wondering why such far-off political and military struggles mattered. "The real drama," he said, "is the dialogue between Charles [*sic*] and the monk, in which they wrestle with the problem of the justification of the emperor's deeds, while the happenings of history appear as fragmentary illustrations of this dialogue."¹⁷ Among the episodes included in the first of the opera's two parts are Luther's appearance at the Diet of Worms; Karl's attempts to win the friendship of Francis I, king of France, whom he held as a prisoner of war but released when Francis agreed to sign a peace treaty and to marry Karl's sister; and Pope Clement's cursing of Karl's soldiers, who captured

and sacked Rome in 1527, even taking the Pope himself prisoner. Part one ends when Karl, recalling in agony the death of his beloved wife, Isabella, suffers a collapse from which he will not recover.

Part two begins with Karl lying in a coma and the stern, elderly Jesuit leader, Francisco Borgia, expressing astonishment that one so young and obscure as Juan should serve as the emperor's confessor. Juan protests that he had not sought this great responsibility but is empowered by his consecration to bear it. He admits that he is unable to judge one who had attempted so much and was so broken by grief. Grimly Francisco reminds him that matters of right and wrong are immutable and not to be questioned and that he must be hard as steel. "You were called upon not to bring temporal happiness, but to spread salvation and truth. Don't let yourself be swayed by the pain that fell upon the guilty ones."^{*} To show just how great is Karl's guilt, Francisco recalls the connivance of Luther and the German Protestant princes in the League of Schmalkalden, which, he says, Karl might have prevented if he had been more rigorous in his treatment of heretics. Their exchange is interrupted by Karl's sister, Eleonore, inquiring how he is. She tells them that his melancholy is owing to remorse over having slept with Francis's mistress, which he did in part because he had yielded to the sensuality of Francis's court and in part to avenge Francis's cruel treatment of Eleonore herself. Francisco brushes her explanation aside and says that for his lust Karl will be cruelly and rightly punished.

Karl awakens, and Juan tells him that he must push on with his recollections of his struggles with the German rebels. The traitorous maneuvers of Moritz, the German leader whom Karl had trusted, are shown, ending with Karl's narrow escape from capture at Innsbruck. Karl admits that he had lost his will to fight, but when rebuked by Francisco he replies, "Do not scold me. For there occurred to me then a thought which only now is fully clear and is the clue to my whole attitude: He who acts endangers the continuity of the eternal and uninterrupted, and only this has meaning. . . . The wise man lets the world go by and does not act. That is the purport of government." But Francisco insists, "You had to act, to struggle to the uttermost." When Karl finally did so, his hold on Germany was broken. The unity of which he had dreamed was destroyed. Suleiman, hearing of events in Europe, observed, "The nations of Europe are free, and they will use their freedom more thoroughly to cut one another's throats and exterminate their neighbors. They may be sure of Asia's gratitude."¹⁸

At this point in the opera past and present begin to coalesce. Following Suleiman's remark an invisible chorus sings, "The imperium is gone. The Last Judgment

^{*}This remark and much else in their exchange are omitted from an abridged version of the opera that Krenek prepared in 1954. A manuscript score of the entire work is among the Krenek papers in the Vienna City Library, but only the abridged score has been published. Although Universal Edition published a full piano-vocal version, only an abridged version is available at present. The omissions do not significantly alter the characterizations or the treatment of the events, but they markedly diminish the didactic nature and the dialectical rigor and emphasis of the work.

is now at hand." Karl realizes that death is near and in a last effort recalls his encounter in Vienna with his brother and his decision to give up the imperial crown. In their exchange Krenek's hopes for the realization of the Austrian mission are made most explicit:

KARL: All this: patchwork. The world-empire is in shambles. The sun which never set goes now forever. But death shall not bring a seemingly meaningless end to this monster; rather, I myself, who summoned this from nothing by free will with the grace of God, will myself send it back there. . . . This world, fallen from the hand of God like a sparrow from its nest, splits into ever more and more deeply estranged parts and disintegrates in sad confusion.

[**FERDINAND:** And would you thus forfeit our destiny?

KARL: Ever more limited to these lands on the Danube, my house may keep for a little while the semblance of unity manifested in pious faith and trust in inner freedom through external order, till, expelled into darkness, robbed at last of power, it sinks and fades, and this world falls prey to the nether forces.]*

FERDINAND: Dire is your prediction, bitter the heritage which you destine for me.

KARL: In my time I shall return to God's throne and implore his mercy so that the conception of the Christian world-empire will live on in you, and in the terrible night which now begins be rekindled at some future time as a new saving light, if it pleases Him.

[**ELEONORE AND FRANCISCO:** Oh sacred light, shine for us. Burn, shine, and be with us.

CHORUS (invisible): Light from Austria.]¹⁹

When the adamant Francisco tells Karl that in giving up his power too quickly he renounced all hope of fulfilling his mission, Karl answers, "Through all my life it was my aim to bring to completion what could not be done. But my good will has never been at fault." He takes up a globe and crucifix to show how he tried to balance them, but the globe falls and shatters, spilling heretical papers that had been hidden in it when it was fabricated in Germany. "Do you see it now?" Karl exclaims. "Laboriously made, the world is but a globe of glass, and it breaks at a touch. The poison corrodes from within. A worm is in the core of the apple."

His lines are an intentional cross-reference to lines sung by his mother, Juana, near the opening. She had presented Karl with an apple; when he found a worm in it, she cried, "A worm in the core of the apple. Such was my happiness, a globe of glass. It burst from inside. . . . Death has its home in every living thing, and something is always missing, missing." Her vision of the corruption of the world had brought her to a state resembling madness. Karl recalls her vision to account for his failure to unify the world—a failure signified in this scene by clocks, which, accord-

*Lines enclosed in square brackets are omitted from the abridged version. Their omission tells much about the changes that had taken place by 1954 in Krenek's thinking and his hopes for Austria and Christian humanism.

ing to legend, Karl played with in retirement and tried unsuccessfully to synchronize. The clocks once seemed to promise a universal order and uniformity, but now, as they run down, foretell the onset of chaos and Karl's approaching death.

Francisco is unmoved and insists that he repent his misuse of power, to which Karl answers, "I repent in humiliation, crushed in the dust, that I fought too weakly for the faith," and commends his soul into the hands of God. A chorus of the dead summons him to join it, and, calling on the name of Christ, he dies.

FRANCISCO [in rhythmical speech]: With this man an era died.

JUAN [in rhythmical speech]: His work is unfinished.

ELEONORE [singing]: Peace be with him.

CURTAIN

As Krenek has said, the drama is in the exchanges between Karl and Juan and, toward the end, among Karl, Juan, and Francisco. Here the characters are defined and motives explored; here the dominant themes and ideas are exposed; here, rather than in the military and personal confrontations, the true conflicts are enacted. The rest is indeed illustration.

Just a few years earlier Krenek had maintained in program notes for the Kassel theater that opera should not have an ethical or philosophical aim, and he had been wary of characterizations that required too much of what he called psychological explanation. Yet *Karl V* has an aim that is both ethical and philosophical. And, as a further contradiction of his earlier views, it is the psychologically complex personality of Karl, even more than the ideological material, that in the end compels attention. For despite Karl's trying to justify his actions by disputatious means, this is not some formulary confession, but the anguish of a tortured man who hovers between action and speculation, boldness and hesitancy, belief and doubt, certainty and perplexity. A man who, as Krenek sensed from the beginning, much resembles Hamlet. As in Shakespeare's play, where the focus is on the nature of the protagonist, events illuminate the man even more than they do the ideas. What is more, all of the principals (with the exception of Moritz) embody—and call forth from within him—aspects of Karl's complex personality, which encompasses the dogmatism of Francisco, the piety of Juan, the sensuality of Francis, and the gentleness and eagerness to please of Eleonore. (Krenek invented the dalliance with Francis's mistress to show how Karl envied his foe, who, with his insouciance and love of pleasure, was what Karl would, unwittingly, have wished to be like were it not for the Franciscan side of his being, which causes him great suffering from remorse and excessive self-censure.) He made irreparable but not dishonorable mistakes, as when he did not follow up his victory over the Protestant princes at Mühlberg with the destruction of their forces but sought instead a union of all religious parties, which realists such as Francis and Francisco would have seen from the start was impossible.

He lacked force not only because of the divisions within himself but because he was confused about his own political and theological goals. His confession is in large measure an attempt to understand and come to terms with himself.

Earlier it was said that to a degree Karl resembled Krenek, and there are instructive parallels in their behavior: the outbursts of energy followed by lassitude; the triumphs followed by withdrawal; the schism between the love of pleasure (significantly depicted here in relation to the airy amusements of the *French* court) and a fascination with systems (the clocks, the twelve-tone technique); the longing for doctrinal certainty; a tendency to submit to powerful, dogmatic aggressors (Francisco, Kraus); and, as a consequence of all these, a propensity for self-doubt and melancholy. But although it had not been visible for some time, Krenek had an asset in dealing with the vagaries of life that Karl as depicted in the opera utterly lacked: a sense of humor, which enabled him to accept the ambiguities of the world with a wry irony that was often *his* salvation.

Yet if the opera has as its central interest Karl's personality, it remains very much a work of ideas. (One critic has called it "a meditation on power and authority.")²⁰ Aided by the anti-illusory effects of the staging and the abrupt time shifts, which keep the audience from losing itself in a story, Krenek presented Karl's career as an object lesson. Like Brecht, he wanted the audience to maintain some distance so that it could consider the ideas presented with critical detachment; his goal thus was the "Verfremdungseffekt" that Brecht sought, though Krenek owed nothing to Brecht, whose writings on the theater he disliked. On its surface at least, Krenek's object lesson was political rather than theological, for although Karl was engaged in a religious rite, he tried to justify his actions in political rather than theological terms. Similarly, it is a political, not a theological, conflict with Luther that is depicted—nationalism versus universalism rather than Reformation versus Counter-Reformation. Nationalism and the lust for temporal power of Pope Clement and the greed for territory of Francis and Suleiman made impossible any return to the humane and transcendental unity of the empire, which had offered mankind its best hope for a peaceful life with meaning defined by something more abiding than earthly desires and material possessions.*

Perhaps it was because the equanimity that he attributed to the empire before its debasement was so important to him that Krenek included Karl's puzzling remark about refraining from action—puzzling in terms not of Karl's personality so much as of Krenek's didactic purpose and his belief in Austria's peril. This dictum, which is made prominent by the organization of the music, is one with which he felt much sympathy, as might be surmised from his own withdrawal when he resettled in Vienna; but it contradicts the theme of the opera and seems an excrescence added on, a consequence perhaps of a momentary interest in Chinese thought on Krenek's

*In a passage omitted from the abridged version Karl observes, "One thing . . . I know for sure; true community exists only in the universal faith in eternal things; all temporal interests are fallacious lies."

part. He was aware of the contradiction and accounted for it by saying that such quietism was an abstract ideal rather than a practical possibility; the most he really hoped for was that there might obtain between governments and their peoples such understanding and agreement, such absence of conflict, that governmental action, though unavoidable, would be unobtrusive and unoppressive. This is fine as an explanation of how Krenek could act to reduce action, as it were, but because it is not part of the opera itself, it cannot reconcile the contradiction there.

Although Karl's defense is political rather than theological (even the Voice of God seems to require that it be so), the opera's end, with its cross-reference to Juana's bitter cry that the world is chaotic and rotten at its core, reintroduces at a point of great intensity a teleological proposition of fundamental theological significance—one that renders moot questions of freedom and necessity, action and quietism, nationalism and humanism. When Karl's wife died, he protested, "The fare at the earthly banquet is served and then removed by unintelligible forces," and the ending reinforces this idea. Did he fail because he was up against political and military forces too powerful for him to eradicate, or because in an evil and inexplicable universe he never had a chance? It would appear from Krenek's comments on the opera that he intended the first explanation. Karl's outcry comes not from rumination but from the torment of a soul exhausted to the point of death. Still, it is there, not in a passing moment but at a peak in the drama, and it makes *Karl V* at its core profoundly ambiguous. Whether or not one regards the ambiguity as a flaw depends on one's own teleology. Depending on one's view, Krenek may have written his libretto more wisely than he knew.

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The music of *Karl V* has many felicitous passages, among them Eleonore's description of her passion for Francis and her pleas for mercy for her brother, as well as the orchestral interlude between the first and second parts. One perceives at once the inventiveness in the handling of voices and instruments, the variety of relations among simultaneously sounded notes that ranges from atonality through quasi-tonality to tonality outright. (Nothing in the twelve-tone technique precludes or forbids occasional tonality, provided it does not last long enough to establish in the listener's mind a priority of importance among the notes.) Yet if one's attention is occupied mainly with the music, as often happens when one listens to a recording or a broadcast or even attends a performance of an opera, then one may find *Karl V* only intermittently interesting. In terms of Krenek's purpose and procedures, this is not a fault. The music, even in the interlude, is there to assist in the projection of characters and ideas. He meant for the audience to put aside the listening habits and expectations nurtured by gorgeous arias and thrilling ensembles and pay close attention to his words and attendant actions. "It is hard," Gary Schmidgall has written, "to take opera seriously because it is so beautiful. In the sheer triumph of vocal

EXAMPLE 3

The basic twelve-tone row of *Karl V*.



EXAMPLE 4

A motif developed from the row of *Karl V*.



EXAMPLE 5

A motif consisting of three chords developed from the row of *Karl V*.



beauty, unfortunately, we are often willing silently to sacrifice other more subtle artistic values. . . . For many who like opera, beauty is sufficient."²¹ But Krennek wanted *Karl V* to be taken seriously. Where beauty helped, fine. What he most sought, though, was force and clarity, which beauty, where it occurred, must enhance, not impair.

Virtually the entire opera is developed from one row (Ex. 3). To unite the fragments of Karl's life and link them with the interpretive exchanges with Juan, Krennek developed a variety of motifs that appear and reappear throughout the opera. One such, contained for example in the trumpet call and its ominous accompaniment that opens the opera (Ex. 4), and in which the basic row can easily be seen, appears seven times in all at points appropriate to the action. Another motif (Ex. 5), created by dividing the basic row into three groups of four notes each and assembling groups into three chords, is used to signal abrupt shifts of subject and atmosphere occasioned by Juan's questions. Yet as Krennek took pains to point out in his Barcelona talk, these and similar cells were not leitmotifs; repeating them was not meant to evoke particular feelings or associations but rather to articulate the continuity of specific kinds of events. He was also careful to avoid patterns larger than these

The row of King Francis in *Karl V.*



EXAMPLE 7

Several versions of the row of *Karl V* appearing simultaneously.



motivic cells lest they impose designs that would subvert his emphasis on the incompleteness of Karl's life. He used the row, he explained, to ensure idiomatic consistency.

Krenek made one interesting departure from the basic row to mark the difference between Francis and Karl and their worlds: he developed a special row for the French ruler (Ex. 6). But even this row is sufficiently tied to the original to maintain idiomatic consistency, for it was created by beginning with the first note of the original, C, then proceeding to the sixth note, B-flat, then to the fifth note after that, F, and so on. In later years he would use more complicated versions of this tactic, which he called "rotation," to maintain the idiomatic and stylistic uniformity of such major works as *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* and *Sestina*; indeed, he took satisfaction in observing that in *Lamentatio*, completed in 1942, he anticipated by several years the use of rotation by Boulez, Stockhausen, and their Darmstadt associates, who were regarded as remarkably ingenious for having invented it.*

For homophonic effects Krenek utilized several versions of the row simultaneously, as in the third through seventh measures of the interlude (Ex. 7). On the

*Krenek's use of rotation to create new rows by reordering the numbers of the notes was anticipated by Berg in his *Lyric Suite* (1925–1926). In composing his opera *Lulu* (1929–1935) he used precisely the same method that Krenek used for the “Francis row.” See George Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality*, 5th ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 72–78.

assumption that his colleagues at Barcelona would be interested in how he created such harmonic units in a twelve-tone work, Krenek pointed out that here the top notes were taken from the basic version of the row, the next notes below them from the inverted version, then below these more notes from the basic version, until finally still more notes from the basic version were added and all twelve tones had been sounded. In this way he minimized the reappearance of any note before the other eleven had appeared—something not easily avoided among such dense vertical structures. These sometimes produced quasi-tonal effects, as with the trumpet call at the opening, which hints at some chord on C, while the measures of the interlude just cited begin with a clearly recognizable D-minor-thirteenth chord and offer here and there suggestions of C-seventh, D-seventh, and G-ninth chords.

Concordant moments such as these were carefully poised against discords to help dramatize contrasts among characters and events. Thus, for example, a wistful quasi-tonality associated with Eleonore is interrupted by harsh dissonance associated with Francisco during their disagreement over Karl's punishment for his lapses, and this both increases the tension of the scene and illuminates the differences between their natures and their attitudes toward human frailty. Krenek described for his Barcelona audience how he focused attention with "increase of agitation by accumulation and the sharpening of dissonance at high, serious, and nodal points of the thought [and with] retrenchment of agitation by diminution of dissonant and increase of consonant elements at opposite places." The very opening (see Ex. 4) provides an interesting illustration of this strategy. The iterated C's in open octaves hint at tonality, and the trumpet call suggests a summons to duty. But they are contrasted with increasing discords among the horns and tuba, created by compacting the basic row. This prepares the way for the shock of Karl's abdication (the first thing we learn about him) and the sternness of the warning by the Voice of God. Similarly skillful joining of sound and sense can be seen on every page of the score.

Because Francis wrote much light verse, Krenek, to help delineate his personality, shows him composing two rondeaux. Here the musical form follows the poetic form and, unlike that of virtually all the rest of the music, is closed. As Krenek explained, Francis, "as a representative of the Latin world with its assurance of classical form, is contrasted with the emperor pulled here and there in unhappy turmoil between the German chaos and the Infinite." He admitted that in following the drama so closely he was obliged occasionally to depart from the row. "The compositional process, as it obtains in this work, can best be described as a working together of a freely inventing component and one that is characterized by the self-creating adherence to the twelve-tone row." Later, he said, he became more imaginative in handling the row, and more strict in holding to it.

Krenek sent a copy of the piano-vocal edition to Adorno, who wrote on October 28, 1934, from Oxford, where he was lecturing, to praise the work. He admired

Krenek's imaginative manipulation of the row, especially in his handling of the homophonic and quasi-tonal passages, but he thought that his friend had not been daring enough. Krenek, he said, used the row too much in the way one treats relationships in conventionally harmonic music. He could have achieved his ends without these suggestions of past practices by much greater use of counterpoint.

Adorno, it appears, was so constricted by his belief in the historical necessity of the twelve-tone technique, whereby anything that even faintly suggested tonality was regressive, that he could not properly appreciate how faithfully Krenek had fitted his music to immediate *dramatic* necessity. Even the instrumentation, Krenek said in Barcelona,

reproduces in its own way the basic "fragmentary" principle of the whole work, since the individual sound strata . . . overlap one another without binding . . . of a soundlike kind. . . . The benefit lies in the fact that the sound never becomes massive; [it] allows the singing voice [to come] through. More than in any other musical theater work, an indispensable fundamental condition of proper performance is that each word here be understood with the utmost clarity. Thus the choruses are sung in unison because in them every word of the text is essential.

He even went so far as to hold that for clarity the chorus should be placed in the pit with the orchestra while on stage silent actors went through the motions of singing!

Adorno, even with his reservations, could not but be impressed. "It is obvious," he wrote, after comparing the opera with the Second Symphony,

that the work signifies a wholly new advance in your development, namely that in which compositional consciousness has seized on instrumentation as an integral factor in compositional form. There is nothing fortuitous and at the same time nothing conventional [i.e., in the treatment of the orchestra]. It is of the utmost and striking significance that you . . . out of the power of your compositional work have discovered the constructive and differentiating principle of instrumentation—exactly at the moment when your method of proceeding subordinated itself to a radical principle of construction [the twelve-tone technique].*²²

Such deployment of the instruments was to become increasingly important in Krenek's music, remaining so right down to *The Arc of Life*, composed in 1981, and the organ and cello concerti composed in 1982.

. . .

Paradoxically, even as Krenek was, as Adorno noted, making new use of the orchestra, he was also making it more subordinate to the vocal elements (though not less important for the meaning and effect of the work as a whole). In 1927 while

*The instrumentation was indicated in the piano-vocal score. With his long experience Adorno would have no difficulty imagining how it would sound.

working at Kassel, he had insisted vehemently in program notes that opera was a form of *drama* and its music must be conceived accordingly. "Opera," as he had written in "Die Opernkomposition," "is not . . . a symphony with costumed singers but a unique and special entity—not a mechanical but a chemical union of . . . elements that cannot be understood apart from one another." Now, as never before, he was obeying this dictum to the degree that in *Karl V* he established a new interactive relationship between text and music and, within the music itself, between the vocal and instrumental elements, for the singers' lines have even more of the qualities of declamation than was the case in *Gesänge des späten Jahres*, while the orchestra is much less a musical and much more a rhetorical (or, as Adorno termed it, differentiating) factor than in conventional opera. The twelve-tone technique, Krenek found, was excellent for highlighting language as such and thus enhancing the articulation of ideas. The subordination of the orchestra to the vocal parts and the music as a whole to the text would increase until, by 1961, when he created *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* (Computed and confounded), the music had virtually no appeal *as music*; thus this later work is essentially a play—a most theatrically effective and entertaining one—the lines of which are delivered with the pace, rhythms, and other phonetic qualities of ordinary conversation, though their eloquence is more than doubled by the music.

It is when the women are singing in *Karl V* that the vocal material is most melodious and the relation of voice to orchestra most like that of traditional opera. The men's parts approach the condition of speech and often move directly into it. Spoken lines in opera are nothing new, being a common feature of eighteenth-century *Singspiele*, but here their use is extended far beyond the limits that had been observed since the rise of nineteenth-century romantic operas. Sometimes they are used as in ordinary recitatives to convey information, but elsewhere they have a particularly dramatic function, emphasizing the starkness of church doctrine when Juan and Francisco argue and, by their unmusicality, the monks' lack of feeling for Karl's inward suffering. The men thus stand in vivid contrast to Eleonore, whose lines are sung and emphasize her loving concern. It is at such moments that the music is most appealing, but these moments are intermittent. The audience, if it is to have continuous pleasure, must apprehend, on its own terms, an entity ("stage work with music") very different from an opera in the ordinary sense—a unique thing-in-itself. Once these terms are accepted, how well does the work succeed?

In his Kassel notes Krenek had said that an opera must have richly dramatic situations united by a simple, intense conflict on which could be built a clear and intelligible plot. Krauss had asked for an opera, and since *Karl V* had not actually been commissioned and assured of performance, Krenek could not depart too far from his own formula and Krauss's expectations. This is one reason why he made such a point about there being a real drama in the exchanges between Karl and Juan. Certainly there is an issue: will Karl exonerate himself? There is conflict, too, as Juan

continues to demand explanations. But there is no clear and intelligible plot, as the term is ordinarily understood—no decisive moment on which the whole work irrevocably turns, and no climax.

Karl's decision to abdicate could have provided such a moment if the material had been differently organized, but it is not part of the continuum of events as presented. Karl's seizure at the end of part one and his death at the conclusion are crises imbued by the music with great intensity, but neither is a climax of the drama of the discussion *per se*, for they pertain to Karl's ill health, not to peaks in the progress of the ideas. If one takes them as climaxes (and because of the music and the impression they make as spectacles it is easy, even natural, to do so), then the drama is moved from the discussion to the fragmented illustrations, where it falls apart. Nor does Karl's character furnish a line of development, because it does not change. Karl is an inwardly divided and complex man, but within moments we know him for what he is, and so he remains, even when most harrowed. Furthermore, as Krenek depicts him, he is essentially a passive man who acts in response to the initiatives of others. "Great operatic characters," Schmidgall has pointed out, "have in common a certain intensity of passion and will."²³ This is true of Orpheus, Anita, and Orestes, all of whom are larger than life, but not of Karl. Thus, in the end, the work succeeds not as drama of the kind Krenek had called for some years earlier, but as a portrait and an elucidation of ideas having major historical importance.

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When Krenek showed Clemens Krauss the partly finished score in 1932, Krauss was so pleased that he thought simultaneous premieres in other cities might be possible and proceeded to obtain expressions of interest from Frankfurt, Leipzig, Hamburg, Stuttgart, and Berlin. Even after Krenek's music was banned in Germany Krauss's enthusiasm was unabated. When Krenek offered to come to Salzburg, where Krauss was conducting in the summer of 1933, and play part two for him, Krauss said that would be unnecessary. Later, when he received the second part, he told Krenek that it was even better than the first.²⁴ Events would show that he had scarcely glanced at any of the music. Nonetheless, on August 22 he signed a contract very favorable to Krenek. Soon afterward the full score and performance parts were delivered to him, and the premiere was set for February 26, 1934. Vocal rehearsals got under way in mid-December. Krenek offered to help train the singers but was politely rebuffed. He heard indirectly that things were going well.

Meanwhile, Krauss, who would soon be working with the orchestra, was having severe difficulties with some of its members and with several of the lead singers. Lotte Lehmann and Elisabeth Schumann were reluctant to learn new roles of the kind he wanted, so he brought in some young German singers with whom he had worked before. Among these was his wife, who was known to be a great favorite of Hermann Goering. Seizing on this fact, Lehmann and Schumann went to Vice-

Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg, minister of culture and the final authority over the Opera, and complained that Krauss was a Nazi. Although they were stars, they did not have enough political influence to be more than a nuisance at this point. But they helped to establish the basis of trouble to come.

The situation was different with Emil Schippers, a popular baritone whom Krauss wanted to dismiss for drunkenness and missing rehearsals. The coalition government headed by Dollfuss was dependent for survival on the support of Prince Rüdiger von Starhemberg, leader of the Heimwehr; Schippers belonged to this organization, as did his friend Hugo Burghauser, first bassoonist of the Opera orchestra and its representative on the board of directors. Burghauser, who had influence with Starhemberg, was well placed to cause trouble for Krauss, which he was happy to do, for they were bitter enemies. The previous April, Krauss had brought a libel suit against the leader of the opera clique, a group hired to stimulate applause. Burghauser had appeared as a witness for the defense and used the occasion to deride Krauss's musical competence. In response, Krauss undertook a disciplinary investigation of Burghauser, but the Heimwehr used pressure to have it called off. Krauss should have resigned then and there, for, as he said later, he had lost his control over the Opera. To aggravate the insult, his five-year contract was withdrawn and a one-year contract substituted. Negotiations on its renewal were scheduled to begin at about the time of the premiere of *Karl V*.

Such was the atmosphere in December when Krauss at last turned to examining the score closely. He was immediately alarmed at both the prospect of the orchestra's reaction to such music and its lack of popular appeal. The work, he told Krenek, gave the impression of being an opera from which arias had been dropped with only recitatives remaining, and he made the astonishing suggestion that Krenek add more appealing music to the "Catholic sections" and limit dissonance to the "Protestant sections." Krenek, though chagrined, was willing to rework some parts to make them more attractive, for he had come to realize that performance depended on his doing so. Later he did not regret complying, for he felt that the changes were legitimate and, as with the lyrical passages given to Eleonore in her debate with Francisco, which he now added, were among the finest parts of the opera. Meanwhile, unaware of Krauss's difficulties with Burghauser, he assumed that the director was losing heart. To encourage him he agreed to oblige when Heinsheimer told him Krauss wanted the opera dedicated to himself. (The dedication was later withdrawn.)

If Krenek did not know about Burghauser, Burghauser certainly knew about him, and he decided to get at Krauss through the opera. In this he was joined by the Nazi sympathizer and critic Joseph Rinaldini, who had viciously attacked Krenek when *Jonny* opened in Vienna and who, like Burghauser, was a cultural director for the Heimwehr. When Krauss took over the directorship of the Opera, Rinaldini wrote a savage piece for the *Deutsch-österreichische Tageszeitung* (*DÖTZ*) vilifying him; he

was particularly outraged by Krauss's collaboration with a Jewish assistant, with whom he had evolved the idea of encouraging Austrians to compose for the Opera. A success for *Karl V* would make Krauss less vulnerable to his and Burghauser's assaults. Therefore, Rinaldini either wrote or arranged for an anonymous article to be written against the opera, which appeared on January 9, 1934, in the Heimwehr paper, *Österreichische Abendzeitung*, to which he often contributed signed pieces. It contained three charges: the opera had offensive scenes; political controversies should not be presented realistically on the stage during troubled times such as the present; and Universal Edition, though an Austrian firm, functioned as the general agent of the Soviet state publishers. Meanwhile, Burghauser prevailed on Josef Krips, Krauss's assistant at orchestra rehearsals (whom the conductor had brought to Vienna after Krips was fired from Karlsruhe for being partly Jewish), to send a memorandum to Vice-Chancellor von Schuschnigg saying that *Karl V* was too difficult, would be extremely expensive to produce, even if given only enough rehearsal time just to scrape by, and would cause a public scandal. Actually, rehearsals had been going well, and even though the Heimwehr's disapproval, the swaggering arrogance of Burghauser, and the prospect of trouble (for the violence of which Nazis and their sympathizers were capable was well known) made many participants nervous, only a few singers and instrumentalists supported the memorandum. Krenek, who had heard nothing, attended a rehearsal and was well pleased; he foresaw no problems.

Then, on January 17, while Krauss was in Budapest with the orchestra,* most of the Viennese evening papers carried an announcement that *Karl V* had been withdrawn owing to lack of dramatic and musical force sufficient to justify the cost. Krauss returned the next day and issued an ambiguous communiqué: he denied that the opera had been withdrawn but said that withdrawal had been discussed, though nothing was settled and talks with Krenek would take place. He conceded that difficulties with the music, especially that of the title role, did threaten the February 26 opening night, but said that this was a religious and patriotic work that was certain to be performed, possibly during the current season. Bewildered and enraged by Krauss's words, Krenek forced him to schedule a rehearsal of the chorus to settle the issue of alleged difficulty; things went so well that the rehearsal was broken off abruptly. As for the leading singer, he made no complaint. But the damage was done, and the *Österreichische Abendzeitung* crowed that it had forced a postponement. For a few days there was talk of staging the opera during the festival weeks in late spring, but on January 23 the board of directors of the Opera announced that *Karl V* was postponed until fall.

With Krauss in retreat, Krenek began his own campaign to save the production. Universal Edition had prepared elaborately bound presentation copies of the work.

*The orchestra regularly gave concerts as the Vienna Philharmonic. Krauss was its principal director in that guise as well.

A friend of Krenek's arranged an audience with Cardinal Innitzer, head of the Austrian Catholic church, to whom Krenek gave a copy with a respectful inscription. The cardinal, who had no idea what this was all about, maintained a distant reserve. Copies were sent to Chancellor Dollfuss, Prince Otto Habsburg, and even Prince von Starhemberg; the last sent a uniformed servant to thank the composer, even though Krenek had long been on the Heimwehr's black list—which was prepared by none other than the vindictive Rinaldini.

As he would soon discover, Krenek had completely misjudged his people. Although they were Catholic, conservative, traditional, hierarchical, and (even von Starhemberg) opposed to the Nazis' Pan-Germanism, they were not a whit more tolerant of progressive music. The religious and political ideas of the opera would count for little with them, and as for the work as a whole, they would loath it.

Talk of a production during the 1935–1936 season came up from time to time until the end of 1934, when Krauss left to head the Berlin State Opera. There he enjoyed the support of Richard Strauss, whose operas he specialized in interpreting, and the protection of Goering; he did not repeat the mistake of encouraging an avant-gardist whose music he did not really know. Thereafter all mention of a production in Vienna ceased. Krenek's hope that with his art he might arouse his countrymen to the defense of their ancient ways was utterly defeated. When, four years later, *Karl V* finally received its premiere, it was in another land. Krenek was not present.

8 · ACTIVIST AND ESSAYIST: 1933 – 1938

In 1935, the English novelist and antiquarian T.H. White, a shy man who preferred the quiet of a library to the turmoil of any public gathering, especially a political one, and the study of the traditions and ceremonies of a long-lost, half-mythical past to campaigning for any present cause, wrote in *England Have My Bones*: “An essential of a man’s life, if he wishes to discover a contact with the world outside him, is not mobility but position. It is helpful, in a world where values change so quickly, to be able to say, ‘I am an Englishman.’” For his England the times were so perilous, with the economy close to ruin and the unemployed listening to talk of revolution in the union halls, with Germany repudiating the Versailles Treaty and taking over the Saarland, with Italy invading Ethiopia and Spain on the verge of civil war, that this retiring man felt compelled to take a stand, to use his pen in defense of the land and the life he loved.

In the same period Krenek had been learning that it helped to be able to say, “I am an Austrian,” and like White he was endeavoring to defend his beloved country with his pen. Consequently, the five years that followed the completion of *Karl V* were to be unlike any others in his long life as for the only time he endeavored to influence the direction of public affairs. When those five years were over, he could no longer say, “I am an Austrian.” Austria—his Austria—had disappeared.

Since taking office as chancellor in May 1932, Engelbert Dollfuss had tried to create a sense of nationhood in the polyglot little remnant of an empire, which, for all the talk about its mission, lacked identity and self-confidence. To that end, on September 11, 1933, he established the Vaterländische Front (Fatherland Front) as the first step toward the one-party, corporate Christian *Ständestaat* that Vogelsang had proposed fifty years earlier and Chancellor Seipel had advocated during the late

twenties. Most Austrian intellectuals were suspicious of his invoking tradition and regarded the Front as an imitation of shabby Italian fascism. But Karl Kraus, who had reluctantly supported the leftist Social Democrats, now spoke up for Dollfuss as a practical politician who got things done. So did Krenck, who, sitting in a wine garden in Gleichenburg, Styria, while on a short vacation, happened to overhear the broadcast of Dollfuss's speech announcing the formation of the Front. Upon his return to Vienna Krenck joined it, although his friends doubted his wisdom in doing so; he was, he wrote later, "almost the only musician of international reputation who supported the revival of the old, supernational Empire conceived in the spirit of Catholic Christianity."¹ As a further step, on March 13, 1934, he rejoined the Catholic church, which he had left when he married Anna Mahler.

In Austria, the church was a state institution. Parish priests received a salary from the government and had specific public duties, such as keeping records of births, marriages, and deaths. Many Austrians—of whom Krenck had been one—took the church for granted. Their practices were routine and the habit of belief weak and easily lost, as Krenck's had been. Indeed, his was not much strengthened by his return to the fold, for the act was more political than spiritual. Like Kraus, he had generally sympathized with the Social Democrats but had lost confidence in them and now believed that the church was the only institution strong enough to oppose the Nazis. For him, returning involved no deep introspection, no hesitation over points of doctrine, no spiritual agitation. (Just how secular the act was is suggested by the fact that Berta joined at the same time and went through three sacraments in about ten minutes, being baptized, confessed, and married—for the second time—on the spot!) Reverence, which would be important for many of Krenck's finest choral works, came later.² Krenck's rejoining the church, like his joining the Front—which would mean little, since he took no part in its activities—seems surprisingly casual for one who had so vividly dramatized the piety of Karl V and had felt such kinship with him. While this may be true by theological standards, in political terms it definitely was not.

Of greater moment was his admission to a circle of leftward-leaning Catholic intellectuals called the *Historisch-Soziologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (Historical-Sociological Study Group), organized and led by Ernst Karl Winter as an outgrowth of his efforts to bring culture to the workers—none of whom ever attended its meetings. Born in 1895, Winter, a sociologist, historian, and political philosopher active in public affairs, had been a friend and supporter of Dollfuss since boyhood. He had started out as a strong monarchist but had developed a concern for the condition of the working class and launched a program called the *Österreichische Arbeiter-Aktion* (commonly known as "Aktion Winter"), which sought to win the workers' support for the Dollfuss regime with a mixture of monarchism and selective Marxism. In a gesture to satisfy the workers, he had been appointed vice-

mayor of Vienna, but he had few duties and no power. Gubler, for one, laughed at Aktion Winter and thought its leader "comical," as he told Krenek, because of the disparity between Winter's ambitious social philosophy and his political impotence.

Yet Winter was admired by the scholars of the study group, which met every two weeks at the home of a member. The group was an object of interest to the police, but it was not harassed because it was small, quiet, and had no following. Catholics were put off by its academic socialism, and workers were indifferent or wholly unaware of its existence. Among its members were Dr. August Knoll, professor of sociology at the University of Vienna, who had gone to school with Krenek and had been the one most responsible for his rejoining the church; Dr. Edwin Rollett, feuilleton (literary) editor of the *Wiener Zeitung*, the official paper of the government and the Christian Social party; Dietrich von Hildebrand, a fiery anti-Nazi who had served on the faculty of the University of Munich until forced to resign and who now edited a journal, the *Christliche Ständestaat*, which he had founded to support Dollfuss and the Vaterländische Front; the eminent historian and social philosopher Ernst von Vogelin, who later taught at Harvard and Louisiana State University; and Nikolaus Hovorka, an editor at Reinhold Verlag. These and others among the roughly twenty members took turns reading papers that were published at irregular intervals by Winter in a journal called *Wiener politische Blätter*.

Krenek was introduced to the group by Knoll and made welcome by Rollett, who on February 25, 1934, had published in the *Wiener Zeitung* the essay "Konservativ und Radikal," in which Krenek argued that society needed both: the conservative preserved culture and standards, while the radical offered ideas needed to keep pace with social change. In spite of his own considerable accomplishments, Krenek was awed by the learning and level of theoretical speculation the members displayed in their papers. Nevertheless, as he was the only artist of consequence among them, the others were ready to defer to his judgment on matters relating to the arts. Emboldened by this acceptance, Krenek wrote what proved to be his most ambitious essay, "Künstlerische und wissenschaftliche Geschichtsbetrachtung" (Artistic and scholarly modes of treating history); this he read to the group on February 11, 1935, and Winter published it in his *Blätter* on March 24.³ It took nerve to offer observations on historical methods to an audience that included several professional historians, but the paper was well received and intensely discussed, in part because Krenek made adroit references to Winter's way of handling the past in his biography of Emperor Rudolf IV of Habsburg, but mainly because he illustrated his argument regarding the arts, which he took without change from Walter Benjamin's *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Origins of German tragedy, 1927), with compelling examples from his own *Karl V*.

Historians, he maintained, regard an artist's representation of the past as a distortion; yet they themselves do not have enough information about what actually occurred to treat their material with the exactness of science. They, too, must base

their interpretations on surmises, and the attempt to discover patterns of human behavior is what brings the artist and the scholar together. Extending to all of the arts Benjamin's claims on behalf of drama, Krenek said that an artistic treatment offers ethical judgments: the artist's representation of the fate of a prominent historical figure furnishes an example of universal human conduct. Citing Shakespeare's tragedies and Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, he said: "The ethos by which the hero is judged is timeless and outside history." Classical drama rationalizes ancient myths or secularizes Christian ideas of man's relations with God within the finitude of history. Baroque tragedy, he maintained, closely following Benjamin, reduced the ethical dimension of drama by taking away the power to choose and making man simply the victim of events. This has been taken to an extreme by contemporary naturalism, which rules out all but psychological forces over which man has no control. It follows, therefore, that naturalism precludes any truly artistic treatment.

Turning to his own experience, Krenek said that dramatic representation is

particularly advanced and emphasized by the element of music. Music has the capacity not only to make prominent the quality of fiction, of artificiality, in the clearest way, but also to make apparent the universal significance of the particular events represented. A further step leads to the *historical opera*, in which music becomes the bearer of reflection, the material of an outer surrounding sphere through which the historical event is contemplated and achieves whatever significance it has. . . . Of course, this function of music has scarcely been recognized; people have been satisfied in opera to use it and account for it simply as decorative, agreeable, unproblematic with respect to representation.

But new musical and staging techniques are opening further dimensions for historical opera. Thus, for example, there are two levels of meaning in *Karl V*: that of the historical events and that of their ethical significance, raised here by the music and staging to a supernatural level. This supernatural level, Benjamin said, characterized tragedy of the highest order and necessitated divine intervention, which in this opera occurs at the outset. God's voice immediately establishes that the historical events are "sublunary in relation to the overarching and encompassing eschatological realm, which is symbolized . . . by Titian's painting, 'The Last Judgment,' [opening] up the perspective of Judgment Day as the goal of all history, that ideal vanishing point of all lines, progressing in time, of historical interpretation, in which the true meaning of history must be unequivocally determined." The music of the opera rescued the events from mere factuality and imbued them with emotion.

Yet in the end, no answer to the transcendent ethical question of Karl's vindication can be given. It remains open because the grace that alone bridges the distance between the historical world and the spiritual realm is silent. "The music, too, does not answer, but it bestows on the sorrow over the silence the comfort of sound, in

which the secret is—sounding—locked.”* Such an inner truth concerning man’s relation to God, he added, is analogous to the inner truths that Winter said in *Rudolf IV* gave historical representations their validity and value. The significance of such representations depends on these truths rather than on consistence and quantity of detail, which are always threatened by the findings of later scholarship. Only when its inner truth ceases to be vital does a historical representation become obsolete. Thus, in the pursuit and communication of inner truths historical scholarship and the arts approach one another. Krenek ended with a quotation from Goethe’s *Materialien zur Geschichte der Farbenlehre* (Materials for a history of theories of color), which Benjamin had used as the epigraph for the first essay in his book: “Because in learning, as in reflection, no whole can be brought together when the inner meaning cannot be expressed, we must as a consequence necessarily think of *Scholarship* as *Art* if we expect any wholeness from it” (Krenek’s italics). It made an august and apt conclusion.

Although the essay was published and eventually republished, only one person outside the Winter circle ever referred to it. This was Adorno, who was impressed, particularly by Krenek’s observations on music, but had reservations that he set forth in a letter from Oxford dated May 26, 1935, of such length as to amount virtually to an essay itself. Together, Krenek’s essay and Adorno’s response constitute another of their great debates—the last preserved in writing. On his side, Adorno showed himself to be by far the more deeply read and the more independent and penetrating thinker, while Krenek was by an equal measure the better writer, some passages in Adorno’s letter being tangled to the point of impenetrability.

For all his greater command of the subject, Adorno had, and generously expressed, great respect for Krenek’s thought. He entirely agreed with Krenek’s views on the cognitive function of art and was convinced that Krenek had truly understood the relation between the aesthetic function of a work of art and its fulfillment of this function, a fulfillment achieved by deliberate imposition of form rather than by letting the work derive its organizing principles from the material, as Hindemith and others were urging. But he thought Krenek was mistaken in maintaining that the difference between artistic and scholarly (or more properly, scientific) interpretations is relative. This notion, he said, apologizing for his “hobby horse,” was too undialectic. “The differentiation of the two fields is one of historical necessity. . . . They may converge in knowledge, not through mediation, but only in the uttermost immanent fulfillment of the rules of form of the two spheres (as extremely opposed to one another).” Failure to insist on the radical distinction between these spheres, Adorno believed, could result in the “aestheticizing” of historical research. It could lead the artist to seek historical authenticity and thus to let the material determine the form of a work. It would also becloud the issues raised by the claim that music

*Compare the emphasis placed here on the religious aspect of *Karl V* with the emphasis on the political aspect discussed in the previous chapter.

can express thoughts and would encourage attempts at representation in music, which both Adorno and Krenek opposed. Minimizing or even abolishing the differences, he asserted, is a goal of idealism, on which thinkers like themselves all fall back, so powerful is its lingering influence, and idealism makes cognition difficult to treat. It evades formulation. Krenek was guilty of "hidden idealism," especially when he drew near to an archetypal conception of tragedy free of concrete historical ties, for "actual history is legitimate tragic drama, and tragic drama, always allegorical, is actual history." At the same time, tragic drama and its realization in opera are so closely interwoven with idealism that one cannot use them as a remedy against idealism. This remedy can come only from concretizing history and applying forms that are themselves concrete and historical, not transcendental and eternal.

Art, when it is most sensitive and knowing, is most separate from the real. For this reason Adorno opposed the implication of a presumably actual, as distinct from a mythical, God in a work of art. "Let me confess that for me something dubious was demanded in the final scene of *Karl*, and I felt something resembling the overstepping of boundaries." He and Krenek, he observed, had long rejected doctrines of applied art put forward by Brecht, the advocates of *Gebrauchsmusik*, the Soviet commissars, and now the German Ministry of Culture, and he was led to wonder if a historically unsuitable invasion of the "real" did not bring *Karl V* near to applied art. "I only raise the question," he added at once, "and would not venture to hypothesize so blandly about so many-layered a work as *Karl*; but in the theory [of the cognitive function of art] I see an element of risk (more than I feel in the whole work)." Krenek was deeply engaged with other interests when Adorno's letter reached him and did not undertake to defend his position, which, although he certainly believed in it at the time, was really more Benjamin's than his own. What continued to be important in his thought was what was really his: the conception of the relationship between music and drama that he had been expounding ever since writing his program notes at Kassel.⁴

Of far deeper and abiding interest than the eschatology of *Karl V* was its defense of Austria, to which Krenek returned in his essay "Zwischen 'Blubo' und 'Asphalt'" (Between "Blubo" and "Asphalt"), published in von Hildebrand's *Christliche Ständestaat* on June 2, 1935—"Blubo" being a contemptuous contraction of the Nazi slogan "Blut und Boden" ("Blood and Soil") and "Asphalt" a Nazi term for excessively refined and perverse Jewish urban (hence asphalt) culture. Krenek's most powerful blow against the Neo-Yahoos, this was also another affirmation of the value of contemporary art and music. Indeed, von Hildebrand must have been so pleased by the scathing comments on Nazi primitivism that he failed to grasp how incisive was its criticism of the regime that his journal so zealously supported. A "New Austria" such as the Vaterländische Front advocated should encourage forward-looking art, Krenek wrote, but everywhere, especially in official circles, it was suppressed in keeping with attitudes scarcely to be distinguished from the

"Blubo" ideals of the Third Reich. "Through the two similarly primitive and dangerous catchwords, the negative *Kulturbolschewismus* and the positive *Bodenverwurzeltheit* [rootedness in the soil], both derived from the National Socialist vocabulary, our cultural life is in danger of hewing to a line that threatens most gravely to compromise the spiritual independence of Austria from the Third Reich, and with it one of the most important presuppositions of its political independence." One cannot sympathize with part of National Socialism and remain otherwise independent, he warned, for it seeks to be and is a totalitarian, all-embracing system.⁵

Krenek was at pains to separate himself from the excesses and vulgarity of parasitic "Asphalt" art, which exploited in the name of freedom the innovations of serious modern art simply to create a sensation and call attention to itself. (He offered no examples. Was he in part responding to old charges that conservatives raised against *Jonny*?) A middle position affirming both traditional Austrian Catholic values and the insights of contemporary art was no lazy compromise.

If the new conception of the state truly wants to establish itself and not merely represent a political expedient that allows its laws to be dictated by external events and at most could serve only to surmount a momentary impediment, it must become conscious of its unique boldness, depth, and originality. Then it will consider adequate only an art in which the bold spiritual venture, joined with earnestness, sense of responsibility, and solid ability, determines the measure of worth, and not the comfortableness with which its form accords with a system of unchallenged, dominant clichés. . . . *What the new state needs is a Catholic Austrian avant garde.* . . . Its expression naturally would not produce primitive exhortations and simple patriotic decorative material but would create out of the depth and universality of the realm of thought that furnishes the spiritual basis of the New Austria the vision from which the tragic reality of earthly life can be brought to valid artistic form. Only if it can extend itself freely in this expression will it be able to create and maintain that standard which alone seems appropriate to the boldness and uniqueness of our conception of the state and provide it with a spiritual background perceptible to the outer world when it seeks to attain that significance for the West which, politically, it properly claims for itself. Out of the very real considerations of self-preservation the state must acknowledge and develop such art as representative of itself. A contrary position works directly in concert with the Austrian provincialism that National Socialism wants to force on us.⁶

Gracefully formed and eloquently argued, this essay, the culmination and finest of Krenek's "Austrian" writings, which began with the text of *Reisebuch* in 1929, was a noble rejoinder to the shabby behavior of the government in the affair of *Karl V*. By now he had more than enough reasons of his own to know and fear the "Blubo" mentality. A month after his *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit* suite had been withdrawn to appease the Nazis, *Schwergewicht* and *Das geheime Königreich* were dropped from the playbill at Coburg. Official persecution of the Jews began in Germany on April 1, 1933, and a concert by Bruno Walter in Leipzig that would

have included Krenek's Theme and Variation for Orchestra, op. 69 (1931), was promptly canceled because Walter was Jewish.*

The Nazis' ban on Krenek's music had serious financial consequences, because little of his work except for *Jonny spielt auf* was performed outside Germany. It was completely ignored in France and Italy. There was some interest in it in England, where Adorno and Edward J. Dent, the president of ISCM, spoke up for it, and a bit more in Switzerland, where Krenek had friends and supporters such as Reinhart and Gubler. Such attention as it got in Austria and Czechoslovakia came mainly from his fellow professionals in the ISCM and was centered in Vienna and Prague. There was absolutely no interest in the United States, where *Jonny*, the only work of his known even by name, had failed in 1929.

Yet his circumstances were enviable when compared with those of German intellectuals and artists. The exodus that would cripple German culture for two or more decades was under way. Nobel laureate Thomas Mann moved to Switzerland. His brother, Heinrich Mann, moved to Paris, as did Kurt Weill. Brecht went to Denmark. Albert Einstein emigrated to the United States, while Alfred Einstein, his cousin and the brilliant music critic of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, fled to England, where he achieved international renown as a musicologist. Schönberg, dismissed from the Prussian Academy of Arts on May 30, 1933, had no wish to return to Vienna and left at once for Paris. The following October he emigrated to the United States and took a position at a tiny conservatory recently started in an old house on Beacon Street in Boston by the cellist Joseph Malkin. In 1934 he moved to Los Angeles, and the following year received a part-time appointment at the University of Southern California; this he left in 1936 for a full-time appointment at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he remained until 1944. Adorno, who was half Jewish and a Marxist, inexplicably was not persecuted but was forbidden to publish. He hoped to obtain a position at the University of Vienna, but when nothing came of this he accepted an appointment as a lecturer at Merton College, Oxford, in the fall of 1933.

Of those who had been close to Krenek, Schreker fared the worst. Forced to resign as director of the Hochschule, he was given a token appointment at the Prussian Academy, which was canceled at the same time Schönberg was dismissed. Thereafter he was completely shut out of German musical life and quickly became impoverished. He died on March 21, 1934, at the age of fifty-six, following a stroke, forgotten or neglected by those who had so recently acclaimed him as Wagner's heir. As for Artur Schnabel, although he was compelled to give up his part-time appointment at the Hochschule and was barred from performing in Germany, he easily filled his calendar with engagements in Austria, England, and the United States, to which he removed in 1939. Eduard Erdmann, in contrast, was importuned by the Nazis

*Early in 1931 Krenek was attacked as a Jew in *Der Führer*, a Nazi paper published in Karlsruhe.

but went into retirement, devoting himself to reading and book collecting and skillfully avoiding pressures to appear in public. Paul Bekker, divorced from his wealthy wife, whose family had been able to protect him, was dismissed from his post as director of the Wiesbaden State Theater and in 1933 moved to New York, where, despite his reputation as a director and musicologist (his biographies of Beethoven and Wagner had been translated and were well known in the United States), he lived in bitter poverty and loneliness until his death in 1937. Karol Rathaus, who had been to school under Schreker with Krenek, moved to London in 1934 and supported himself by giving private lessons. Living in Vienna, Alban Berg was in much the same situation as Krenek—free from persecution but with little income from his music. He scraped by on a small allowance for managing part of his family's affairs while he worked on his opera *Lulu*. Erich Kleiber, showing great courage, premiered an orchestral suite from the opera on November 30, 1934, in Berlin; this infuriated the Nazis, who were further angered when the reviews, though negative, were not harsh enough. Although the Nazis wanted Kleiber to remain as musical director of the Berlin State Opera because of his international eminence, in 1935 he moved to Buenos Aires—according to legend, after he had proposed an all-Mendelssohn program, which was rejected with horror.

Things had reached a point at which Krenek determined he should do more than simply write on behalf of Austria and the arts. Back in 1930 he had argued in "Soll ein Künstler publizistisch tätig sein?" (Should an artist engage in public affairs?), published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, that an artist must maintain detachment; he cannot be an activist in his art, cannot use it to cope with life's problems. Instead he should so represent the human condition that others would gain a better understanding of it. That would be his contribution to public affairs. But less than a year later he told an audience in Mannheim that politically neutral art was not possible, and by then he was deeply engaged with contemporary issues in preparing *Karl V*. A few days later he wrote to Gubler saying he could not come to Frankfurt because of the obligation imposed on him by Vienna, by which he meant not his agreement to compose an opera but his concern over Austrian life. But despite these convictions and the lengths to which he had gone with *Karl V*, he could not bring himself to use his art in a direct and explicit engagement with public affairs, so great was his revulsion against applied art. Yet might he not use his prestige and his understanding of his art, if not the art itself? The answer now was yes. Like T. H. White, he was being drawn from his study into the noisy arena. Helping to bring him out of the seclusion he had sought when he resettled in Vienna were two unusual men: Anton Webern and David Josef Bach.

Bach, born in Vienna in 1874, was a musicologist and fierce leftist. Since 1917 he had edited the literary and arts section of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, official paper of the Social Democratic party, for which he also wrote occasional music reviews. Like Winter, but much more effectively, he was forever seeking to bring culture to the

working classes, and in 1905 he founded the Workingman's Symphony, which gave concerts conducted by such distinguished figures as Richard Strauss, Furtwängler, Schalk, and Szell. (The orchestra's personnel consisted not of workers but of professionals from various musical organizations in Vienna; the name signified the audience Bach wanted to reach.) In 1919 he founded the Singing Society; when the Social Democrats took over the city government in 1920, both the orchestra and chorus were supported by the Kunststelle (Arts Council), an arm of the party, and they often gave joint concerts. In 1923, Bach engaged Webern as the conductor of the Singing Society (for which his rehearsal pianist was the young Erich Leinsdorf), and in a short time Webern was leading the orchestra concerts as well. A devout Catholic and member of the minor nobility (he was entitled to use but had dropped—more from modesty than political conviction—the “von” from his family name), Webern was unhappy with the anticlericalism of the Social Democrats, but this was a good position (and the only regular one he ever held), and the musicians he worked with were excellent.

Late in 1931, at about the time of the Mannheim talk, Bach invited Krenek to lecture in an extension course called “Art and Life,” sponsored by the Kunststelle. He would be paid a token five schillings for speaking on “Music's Picture of the World.” He declined. The title suggested too strongly that Bach was thinking of applied and representational music. But the indefatigable Bach soon tried again with a topic more to Krenek's liking. He had decided to form a free *Hochschule* in which the leading musicians of Vienna would take part—for spiritual rewards—and on September 9, 1932, he wrote to Krenek inviting him to teach a course entitled “Opera Today.” The pay would be ten schillings, which was what Webern was getting for a course on contemporary music. Being too busy with *Karl V*, Krenek could not teach the entire course, but he agreed to give a lecture called, of all things, “Music's Picture of the World.” His work on *Karl V* had persuaded him that music did offer the kind of unspecific but powerfully evocative world-view he was later to describe in his talk for the Winter circle. The lecture took place on November 3.

In agreeing to take part he had been strongly influenced by the example of Webern, with whom he was now on intimate terms. In time Webern would become one of the three most powerful influences on Krenek's thought and creative work (the others being Schubert and Kraus); in this he far exceeded Schreker, Kurth, Schnabel, Erdmann, Les Six, or Adorno, significant as these figures had been. Krenek had made his acquaintance upon his return to the city, but Webern was shy, extremely reserved, and sixteen years his senior, and they paid little attention to each other until June 1930, when Webern chose Krenek's *Little Symphony* for a June 22 concert broadcast on government radio. Afterward he told Schönberg that this was the first time that he had really concerned himself with Krenek's music: “They will not be able to reproach me for not paying more attention to it, now that I have, after

all, a little more free play as a conductor," he wrote on July 1, 1930. "It was the first time I had *really* concerned myself with his music. Much is frightening, some of it quite amusing."⁷

Two years later, in honor of the centenary of Goethe's death, the Vienna Council of Labor Unions sponsored a program by the Workingman's Symphony and the Singing Society conducted by Webern, who included Krenek's *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit* suite. (Coincidentally, the current issue of 23 carried an article by Rudolf Ploderer that praised Webern as a composer and conductor.) Then Webern conducted a version of *Durch die Nacht* arranged for singer and chamber ensemble at the June 1932 ISCM festival in Vienna. He also included it on a BBC program that he conducted on April 16, 1933, by which time the two men had become close friends. Webern now treated Krenek as if he were one of the Schönberg circle, remarking during the course on contemporary music he was teaching for Bach: "Nowadays 'cultural bolshevism' is the name given to everything that is going on around Schönberg, Berg, and myself (Krenek too)."⁸ But Schönberg and the otherwise cordial Berg never regarded him so, and others, such as Zemlinsky, took care to remind him that he was an outsider, regardless of his adopting the twelve-tone technique.

Webern was drawn to Krenek by more than music. He admired Krenek's essays on Austria, Catholic humanism, and the arts, writing to Krenek on March 6, 1934, soon after the publication in 23 of Krenek's essay "Freiheit und Verantwortung" (Freedom and responsibility): "Your 'avowal of faith' has given me extraordinary joy, your avowal of the viewpoint that art has its own laws and that, if one wants to achieve something in it, only these laws and nothing else can have validity. However, as we recognize this we also sense that, *the greater the confusion becomes*, the graver is the responsibility placed on us to safeguard the heritage given us for the future."⁹

From Webern's words it might appear that Krenek was retreating from his new, and somewhat ambiguous, view that art might affect public affairs, but in fact he was not. In another essay, entitled "Das Nationale und die Kunst" (Nationality and art), published in the *Wiener Zeitung* at the same time, he attacked the idea, popular with the Nazis, that works of art should be nationalistic. While they might exhibit national characteristics, he said, if they obeyed the laws of art they would be universal in meaning and purport. Such a meaning could have significance for public affairs without reducing the works to applied art.

The confusion that Webern referred to was an uprising of the workers of Vienna that began on February 12 after Dollfuss abolished all political parties except the Vaterländische Front. Although he was acting to head off attempts by the Nazis and the Heimwehr to take over the government, it was not they but the left that rose. Street fighting broke out, culminating after three days in the bombardment of apartments in the workers' district of Vienna in which a thousand persons were

killed.* One month later the Nazis made their move, but Dollfuss was prepared and easily defeated them. Meanwhile, the abolition of parties put an end to the Social Democrats and their projects such as the Kunststelle, the Workingman's Symphony, the Singing Society, and Bach's *Hochschule*—and to Webern's one steady job.

The Vienna chapter of the ISCM, which called itself the Verein für Neue Musik (Society for New Music), had been closely though informally interwoven with the Kunststelle. Founded in 1922 during ISCM's first year, it had among its leading members Schönberg; Berg; Paul Stefan, the principal editor of *Anbruch*; Bach; and Paul Pisk, composer and music editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*.† In the eyes of government officials, the ties with the Kunststelle and the prominence of Bach and Pisk in its activities linked the society with the proscribed Social Democrats. They remembered how a concert conducted by Webern on March 19, 1933, had been announced as commemorating a workers' uprising in March 1848 and had included, along with Krenk's cheerful *Three Merry Marches*, which was innocent enough, the premiere of Hanns Eisler's aggressively Marxist *Das Lied von Kampf* (Battle song) with a text by Brecht. Censorship was so strong at the time that no mention of this concert was allowed to appear, even in the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Given the tense atmosphere, the society was now keeping a low profile, meeting infrequently, and giving up public concerts for fear it be banned.

Krenk had joined the society on his return to Vienna in 1928. By then Schönberg had moved to Berlin, but his influence was so powerful that even in this group Krenk was made to feel like an outsider. Now, encouraged by Webern's friendship and example and wishing to assure the government, which in general he approved, that contemporary music did not subvert traditional Austrian values and should be regarded with less hostility, he founded in the fall of 1934 the Österreichische Studio, a prudently nonpolitical outlet for both contemporary music and neglected music of the past. Willi Reich, his co-editor on 23, helped him present in the Ehrbarsaal, a hall near the Karlsplatz that seated about three hundred, a series of five concerts beginning on October 25, 1934, and concluding on March 25, 1935. Krenk introduced the music with remarks that were later published in 23.

At the first concert, Schönberg's revolutionary Three Piano Pieces, op. 11, the first truly atonal work, was performed along with songs by Julius Bittner and a string quartet by Franz Schmidt under the heading "Three Sixty-Year-Olds." (Now almost wholly forgotten, Bittner and Schmidt were Austrian composers known for their operas.) Another program consisted wholly of early ecclesiastical music, while the final one included two songs by Adorno, sung by Herta Glatz accompanied by

*While the fighting was in progress, Krenk made his overtures to Cardinal Innitzer on behalf of *Karl V*. As they talked, they could hear the turmoil in the streets.

†Pisk emigrated to the United States in 1936, taught at several universities, and made numerous appearances around the country as a recitalist and spokesman for contemporary music. As a result he came to be thought of as an American composer.

Krenek, and the premiere of Krenek's *Vier Kleine Männerchöre mit Alto-Solo* (Four little male choruses with alto soloist), op. 32 (1924), on a text from Hölderlin, performed by the Vienna Men's Singing Society with Glatz as the soloist. Despite the small size of the hall and the unusual programming, the series managed to break even, but the performances had no discernible effect on the authorities, who thought they offered music by Jews for Jews and paid little heed. In the aftermath Krenek's colleagues in the society decided that it was once more safe to meet and to offer concerts, so he dropped the Studio. So far his attempts at influencing the government had accomplished little beyond making him known not simply as the composer of the controversial *Karl V* but also as a member of two suspect groups, Winter's circle and the coterie in which Bach was so conspicuous.

When the society resumed operations, its membership included Bach, Pisk, Webern, Stefan, Krenek, Willi Reich, Egon Wellesz, Eduard Steuermann, Mark Brunswick (an American who later served several terms as president of the U.S. section of the ISCM), Heinrich Jalowetz, Josef Polnauer, Rita Kurzman, and Paul Czongka, a Hungarian conductor and impresario who was married to Madame Glatz. One might assume from such a roster that the meetings were brilliant colloquia, but in fact the minutes show that they were usually concerned with humdrum business related to the concerts.¹⁰ One of these included Krenek's *Symphony for Nine Solo Instruments*, op. 11 (1922), some songs from Schönberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Garten*, op. 15 (1908), and Webern's *Concerto for Nine Instruments*, op. 24 (1934). Such a program would compensate for many a lackluster meeting, and Krenek, resolute in his defense of avant-garde music, attended faithfully.

Indeed, he did more, serving as a delegate to the ISCM festival in Prague during September 1935, where he helped draft a resolution rejecting all restrictions on the freedom of composers on grounds of nationality, race, or religion. (One week later Germany passed the Nürnberg Laws, which deprived Jews of citizenship.) None of his music was performed at this festival, but he discussed possible broadcasts of it with Edward Clark, head of music for the BBC and a member of the British delegation. The following April he attended the festival at Barcelona, for which the Austrian chapter was to provide the musicians and the conductor, Webern. How much he had become a man of affairs is indicated by his being put in charge of the arrangements, which included overseeing the preparation for the premieres of Berg's *Violin Concerto* and his own *Fragments from Karl V*. It turned out to be a dreadful assignment. Webern spent so much time rehearsing the opening measures of the concerto that there was no time for anything else. At the last, desperate moment, the concerto was turned over to Scherchen and the fragments to Ernest Ansermet, while Webern went off to sulk. Miraculously, the performances went well, and although Krenek was furious with his friend, he was so pleased with the outcome that in his final report he merely glossed over the difficulties, thus restoring

good relations. A year later he was off again to Prague for a meeting to draft statutes to govern the overall organization, and while there he met officers of the state opera house and discussed a possible production of *Karl V*.

Meanwhile, Krenk was also serving as president of the Gesellschaft der Autoren, Komponisten, und Musikverleger (Society of Authors, Composers, and Music Publishers, or AKM), which collected royalties for its members. Earlier he had joined the Genossenschaft Dramatischer Schriftsteller und Komponisten (Association of Dramatic Authors and Composers, or GDSK), which was affiliated with the Genossenschaft zur Verwertung musikalischer Aufführungsrechte (Association for Dispensing Musical Performance Rights, or GEMA), a powerful organization based in Berlin that likewise collected royalties. He was elected president of the GDSK in 1933, but almost at once GEMA, its parent, was liquidated by the Nazis, whereupon Krenk joined AKM, becoming *its* president in 1935 and remaining in office into 1937. His duties were enormous. Simply keeping up with the correspondence was almost a full-time task. AKM monitored theaters and opera houses, some fairly remote, in Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, and collected 10 percent of the receipts on every performance of a work by a member. It was, in effect, a composers' and authors' union. It had no legal standing and depended for its effectiveness on the influence and loyalty of its members; this made it essential that its officers understand the law and be skillful negotiators. Being conscientious and orderly, Krenk devoted an astonishing amount of time and energy to AKM, gaining experience that would in later years prove valuable.¹¹

In the spring of 1936 Krenk journeyed once more to Prague to read a paper, "Was erwartet der Komponist von der Musikerziehung?" (What does the composer expect of music education?). Leo Kestenberg, his patron from Berlin days, had been driven from his post in the Ministry of Science, Culture, and Education, in which he had exercised great influence over music instruction throughout Germany, and had emigrated to Prague, where he founded the International Society for Music Education. He invited Krenk to address the society in that city, and on April 8 Krenk, after some ironic self-depreciation (being, he said, merely a creator, not a teacher), reaffirmed his earlier misgivings about *Spielmusik*, which, he said, could displace serious effort and learning. It is easier, he told his audience, to perform such stuff than to listen to a Schönberg quintet; but, "instead of confirming in young people, as often happens, the view that our art music is the problem of our time and remote from the people . . . , the teacher should attempt to make clear that, in fact, the seemingly incomprehensible and aloof is significant and important, incomprehensible only because it represents a dignity and value long absent from life."¹²

His own music education was proceeding apace at this time, for there came into his hands an essay by the American musicologist Richard S. Hill, entitled "Schoenberg's Tone-Rows and the Tonal System of the Future"; this piece had more influ-

ence on his thinking about music than anything since Kurth's pamphlet on linearity—more even than Erwin Stein's explanation of the twelve-tone technique or Adorno's essays and letters. Published in January 1936 in the *Musical Quarterly*, it brought together in one compact account the miscellaneous descriptions of Stein, Adorno, Joseph Matthias Hauer, and others, and provided illustrative tables that were particularly appealing to Krenek.

Hill began by arguing, "If modern music were stripped to its barest essentials, its most salient characteristic would undoubtedly be its preoccupation with new systems of tones. . . . Primarily it is a composer's problem." He then recounted precisely what Krenek had gone through before turning to the technique.

No one, not even the most advanced of composers, is so weary of the diatonic system that he can no longer obtain an emotional thrill from a Mozart quintet. But when it comes to composing new works in that system, the ambitious and fastidious creator finds that the functions and typical relations of its tones have become stereotyped. So much so, in fact, that they are intuitively perceived when barely implied, with the sad result that he is being continually haunted by familiar memories.

Of the many systems substituted, only one—the twelve-tone—seems to contain within itself potentialities for future development into a rich and varied functionally organized system.

Whereupon he offered examples to show that "it seems hardly possible to stress too much the logic and naturalness of this development. The twelve-tone system is no arbitrary freak." Like any musical system, it consists of manmade conventions no better or worse than any others. But there remained, Hill argued, much organizational work to be done to enhance the flexibility and expressiveness of the technique while preserving its orderliness, and to this end he offered a suggestion that at once appealed to Krenek:

If the row were used as a mode, it would not be necessary to treat it as an endless chain, to be kept intact at all costs. Successive phrases, separated by dead intervals, would not need to be successive segments of the row. It should be perfectly possible to repeat the same segment on the same notes or in sequences without having the rest of the notes occur in other parts. It would not be necessary to continue through the whole row any more than it is necessary to play the entire scale at present.¹³

As will soon be seen, Krenek could scarcely wait to put in motion the ideas that sprang to him from this essay.

Meanwhile, he received two books to review for the *Wiener Zeitung* that further excited him and made urgent the need to put his own thoughts in order. The first, *Grundlagen einer autonomen Musikästhetik* (Fundamentals of an autonomous music aesthetic) by Ernst Georg Wolff, his friend from Zürich days, reaffirmed his view,

central for him since his reading of Kurth, that music *is* autonomous—and thus free to follow its inherent logic, as Hill maintained. The second book, to which he himself had contributed background information, was *Der musikalische Schaffensprozess* (The musical creative process) by Julius Bahle, wherein he found another item for his horde. Following Schönberg he called it “the musical idea,” which he later defined as

the total conception of the work . . . , the top-layer of the creative process, the one nearest to extramusical matter, from which it receives impulses of the most varied kinds. . . . The general creative intentions are contained in the idea-layer; they are always accompanied by musical conceptions whose indeterminacy and generality distinguish them from thoughts. The idea, then, is an entity of a higher order . . . , it is general . . . , it does not reach the listener directly . . . , but can only be recognized by synthetically grasping the thoughts in which it is expressed.¹⁴

Webern, Hill, Kurth, Wolff, Bahle . . . autonomy, musical idea, mode, symmetry—Krenek needed to put this conglomerate in order, and this he did in six lectures delivered in the club room of (aptly) the Society of Austrian Engineers and Architects between October 23 and December 18, 1936, to an audience of roughly fifty loyal listeners, some of them associates from the ISCM.¹⁵ Contemporary music, he told his audience—meaning, as it turned out, mainly twelve-tone music—is obscure because we do not understand its forms. We must transform our sensual perceptions into intellectual perceptions in order to gain this understanding. To this end he proposed a theory of music not confined to any idiom but embracing all musical phenomena and based on five premises, several of which had long been fundamental to his thought:

1. Musical content does not represent anything extramusical.
2. Musical thoughts cannot be rendered in any other medium. The creation of music involves thinking directly in musical language, which cannot be grasped directly in conceptual terms. Thus, for example, a composer thinks in terms of triads, dominant sevenths, and so on, and not in terms of things for which the music “stands” or “means.”
3. Music is autonomous. It obeys its own laws. It is to be valued for itself and not for what it “expresses” historically, psychologically, or in any other way.
4. The “laws” of music are not preordained, not “given in nature” and discovered there by man. Just as the axioms of geometry are free assumptions of the human intelligence for the purpose of geometric thought, so these laws are assumptions for the purpose of musical organization, for the articulation in tonal language of musical thought processes.

5. Major-minor tonality is but one set of assumptions. Others, equally valid and effective, are possible. One such is the twelve-tone technique.

Krenek conceded that assumptions may take on the appearance of laws.

Partly because the artists of any age, any one cultural and geographical community, tend to have thoughts of a similar kind, and partly because one specifically strong mind will give a lead to the thinking of many others, one particular tone-language will become valid for considerable periods and areas. It is not the other way around—that composers use it because it is valid for some unknown reason. . . . The [musical] thought is always sovereign, and the new thought creates a new language for itself.¹⁶

Using these premises, Krenek explained how the assumptions of major-minor tonality had been stretched so far that they lost their organizational effectiveness, and how the twelve-tone technique with *its* assumptions came into being. His exposition was lucid, his examples persuasive, and his perspective general until the fifth lecture, “Music and Mathematics,” when he considered the special case of the all-interval row—one in which the eleven intervals that can occur among the twelve notes within an octave all appear—and the arithmetic operations whereby such a row can be constructed. He began this excursus by saying that “any who concern themselves in a practical way with row composition will quickly learn that the type and sequence of intervals appearing in the row are of the greatest significance for the tonal-language structure of the composition.” (He could have cited the way the fourths and fifths in the “Francis row” of *Karl V* made it easy for him to achieve consonance and quasi-tonality in the melodious vocal line and the accompaniment of the French king’s rondeaux.) “The composer,” he continued, “will want to work with a row that offers the whole enterprise the least limitation together with the greatest possible opportunities. This is obviously [!] a row in which all intervals appear so that none has the upper hand.” This extends to the intervals, he pointed out, the nonrepetitiveness and resultant equality belonging to the tones themselves. This was all well and good, but then he went on for what amounted, when the lectures were published, to six pages of diagrams, charts, and arithmetic exercises, which he justified by asserting: this “in no way forms a paper amusement but can be of direct significance for the musical enterprise because we know what influence the development of the row has on musical ideas.”¹⁷

Still, one feels that in some degree this really was a paper amusement, the more so as it was followed by some extravagant analogies and claims for contemporary music. Starting with the instructive comparison of the so-called laws of music with the axioms of Euclidean geometry, which he rightly said were simply postulates to enable one to think in certain ways, he got carried away and asserted that the twelve-tone technique was like *non*-Euclidean geometry and yielded results similar to those produced when this geometry was applied in physics. Retrogression in twelve-tone

music, he maintained, abolished ordinary time much as the concept of the fourth dimension does. As a consequence, twelve-tone music assumes an "eschatological color," a "solemn dialectic," from "its relation with the unending," when it returns to its own beginning, as in the unending canon form that twelve-tone composers liked to use.*¹⁸

This was of course nonsense. It gave the impression that Krenek enjoyed a familiarity with mathematics and physics that he did not have (otherwise he would have known better than to make such a comparison) and added nothing to one's understanding of twelve-tone music. Fortunately, when this lecture was subsequently reprinted, his better judgment prevailed, and he omitted this dalliance with Einstein's theory of relativity and contented himself with the observation that "a musical retrogression could well create the impression of time moving backward. . . . It must be understood, however, that this impression is merely imaginary and that in reality a retrograde motion progresses forward in time just as its prototype, the progressive motion, does." There was no mention of eschatological color.¹⁹

These passing eccentricities aside, the lectures were excellent and informative; nothing as helpful for understanding new developments in music was then available to the public. In them Krenek showed that he had the true mentor's passion to elucidate. His tone was at once affable and thoughtful, informal yet dignified, and these qualities, together with his vivid and often homely illustrations, must have established a bond of geniality between speaker and audience. His analyses, even in the odd excursus, were trenchant, his transitions deft, making his exposition easy to follow. He showed himself to be a natural teacher.

But not a well-paid one. Neither the lectures nor any other of his efforts on behalf of music brought in much money, and he was beginning to feel acute need. His German investments from the royalties on *Jonny* had been seized, while investments made elsewhere earned little. The leaders of the government and the Vaterländische Front continued to reject absolutely any collaboration with progressive arts and artists, and the public responded to his efforts with (as he put it later) hostile indifference or angry resistance.²⁰ A quick trip to England—his first—in the fall of 1935 helped somewhat, thanks to arrangements made by Edward Clark after their meeting in Prague. On November 1, the BBC chorus under the direction of Leslie Woodgate performed *The Seasons*, op. 35 (1925), and Herta Glatz, accompanied by Krenek, sang selected songs, including some from *Gesänge des späten Jahres*. On the 11th, Krenek conducted a performance of his *Concerto Grosso*, op. 25 (1924), as part of the BBC's regular Sunday morning concert. The principal benefit of the trip, however, was not financial but companionly, for it gave Krenek an opportunity to visit Adorno at Oxford, where they had long talks on many of the ideas that Krenek put into his lectures. Adorno reported that he was making only slow progress with

*An unending, or perpetual, canon is one in which the end circles back on the beginning, as in the round "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

an opera based on *Tom Sawyer*.^{*} Krenek was doing no better in that regard; he had not completed a new musical work in over a year.

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Krenek's music making had seen a marked reduction since *Karl V*. In 1933 he wrote a few songs that remained in manuscript, and as the year drew toward a close (and the opera toward its unhappy fate) he contracted with Universal Edition to compose something for the Venice Festival of 1934. Rinaldo Küfferle, an Italian who had done other work for Universal Edition, was asked to prepare a libretto. They met in San Remo and decided to use the story of Cephalus and Procris from the seventh book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Küfferle went to work and soon produced a text. Krenek worked at the score through the spring and early summer of 1934 while attending meetings of the Winter group and writing for the *Wiener Zeitung*, and early in September the one-act opera *Cefalo e Procri* went into rehearsal. The conductor could not understand the score, parts of which were in a very loose twelve-tone idiom, and was replaced by Scherchen, who soon had problems of his own.

According to the legend, Cephalus, a mighty hunter, was accompanied everywhere by a great dog, a present from his wife, Procris, who had received it from Artemis. Küfferle should have found some way to leave the dog out (after all, not everyone knows the story well enough to miss it), but he included it in his script. Somehow Scherchen managed to irritate the animal chosen for the part, which made a shambles of rehearsals by barking whenever Scherchen moved. It was replaced by one too sleepy to bark—or to fill the role.

Despite all this, the opera opened in the Teatro Goldini on September 18. Küfferle appeared in a spectacular Fascist uniform, which was greeted with great applause. It was about the only thing that was, for, although one critic wrote that for an international audience such as attended the festival the twelve-tone technique was no longer a "difficult" idiom, the opera was poorly received. Thereafter it disappeared, as well it should have (though Berg, whom Krenek visited at Velden on his way back to Vienna, liked the score).[†]

After this experience Krenek did no more than arrange some Austrian folk songs for chorus and some Italian ballads for voice and piano until the spring of 1935, when he acquired by chance a curious book, *Byzantinisches Christentum* by Hugo Ball, a poet, cabaret pianist, and the proprietor of the Café Voltaire, the headquarters in Zürich of the original Dadaists, of whom he had been one. Written after Ball's conversion to Catholicism and first published in 1923, the book offered rhaps-

^{*}He had been working on it for a year. Later, after he had emigrated to the United States, he found out that most of the houses in the region where the opera was set were made of brick, whereas in his treatment they were made of wood, and he abandoned the project altogether. But his heart seems not to have been much in it at any time.

[†]This was the last time Krenek saw Berg alive. Berg died on Christmas Eve 1935 as the result of blood poisoning brought on by a bee sting the previous August.

sodic accounts of the lives of three early saints, one of whom was Simeon Stylites (390–459), a Syrian who lived from 423 until his death on a pile of stones (or, according to legend, a pillar) nearly sixty feet high. Saint Simeon undertook long fasts and spent his days in prayer and preaching to pilgrims, many of whom traveled great distances to hear him. An outsider and visionary of the kind that had long appealed to Krenek, he resembled Karl V in many respects. He had another quality that interested Krenek: absolute intransigency, a quality he admired in Kraus and Webern as well.²¹ He decided to write an oratorio based on Saint Simeon's life.

He began by assembling a twenty-four-part text that included readings from Ball's narrative and selections from the Psalms and the Sermon on the Mount. The story of Saint Simeon's conversion and rejection as a heretic was well suited to the drama and high seriousness of a religious oratorio, but Ball had also included reports of miracles involving conversations with deer and snakes that were at best trivial folktales. Nevertheless, Krenek retained them in the text, which he completed late in May 1935. After time off to write "Zwischen 'Blubo' und 'Asphalt,'" he began composing the music on June 5, starting with a search for an all-interval row, for he thought that such a row would assure the greatest melodic diversity. He hoped to find some formula for developing one, but in the end he pieced his row together by trial and error.

As he worked he did something he had never done before and would never do again: he kept a day-by-day record of his progress. (Lost for half a century, it reappeared when Krenek and the author were examining Krenek's copy of Ball's book and sheets covered with minute penciled words and numbers fell to the floor.) The tone of the record, its diagrams, indeed its very existence, suggest an attitude toward the making of this work that was new. From it one gets the impression that an important part, perhaps even *the* most important part, of the composing, which went forward steadily throughout the summer in Tannburg and Galtür, was the application of abstract schemata in a manner akin to factoring polynomial functions or assembling a jigsaw puzzle—as if Krenek were engaged in a fascinating game, and playing this game meant as much as the quality of the music that came out of it.

In any case, he finished the music for the first half by late September, but instead of pushing on, he paused to do the instrumentation. (Ordinarily with a work of this scope he would complete the music in what amounted to a piano-vocal version before orchestrating it.) He finished the full score of part I on February 6, 1936. Then he stopped, never to resume work again.

The half-completed oratorio begins with a narrator, a mezzo-soprano, singing an excerpt from the writings of Theodoret, a Greek historian and contemporary of Saint Simeon, that Ball had used as an epigraph. This is followed by a spoken, unaccompanied reading of the beginning of Ball's account, after which the narrator sings a summary of the saint's life up to the time when he established himself on his pillar. The summary is interrupted by passages of sung dialogue that depict Simeon

as a boy questioning an old man about the meaning of a church service he had come upon, as a young heretic arguing with an abbot, and as a man speaking with an angel who appeared to him in a dream. It is also interrupted by selections in Latin from the Psalms, particularly the eleventh and the twenty-first, and by two more readings from Ball. Part I ends with a furious debate, sung by a mixed double chorus, between those who regard Saint Simeon as a scandal and those who think he is the new Messiah. As the debate fades, he is left staring into the darkness and wondering what instructions God will give him.

Besides the narrator and chorus, the singing parts include Simeon (tenor), the angel (soprano), the old man and the abbot (sung by the same baritone), and a choir of monks intoning the Psalms. The music is declamatory and approaches the condition of speech much more than was the case with *Gesänge des späten Jahres* or the disputatious parts of *Karl V*. The hortatory effect is enhanced by unusually wide intervals in the vocal lines, elocutionary articulation, and wiry, very open orchestration wherein sonority is eschewed in favor of a stark geometry of form. As will be seen, Krenek was anticipating by many years the dominant features of his masterworks, *Sestina* (op. 161, 1957) and *The Dissembler* (op. 229, 1978), in which this effect is even more deliberate.

Part I has an impressive grandeur, and the dramatic intensity of its ending is magnificent. Part II, which would have included descriptions of Saint Simeon's miracles, his temptation by Satan (which Ball handled clumsily), and his death, all interspersed with more readings and fragments from the Psalms, would have been a great comedown from the immense image of the anchorite confronting the gathering night. But suppose Krenek had completed the work. What chance would it have had for performance, given the attitudes of the government and the public, and where in Austria could there have been found at this time soloists and a chorus able and willing to cope with its technical demands?

In fact, Krenek gave no heed to these matters. As was not the case with *Karl V* or *Cefalo e Procri*, and certainly not with his writing, especially on public affairs, he seems to have been working simply to please himself, and when another interest intervened, he put the oratorio aside, though at the time he did not mean to abandon it. However, he was easily distracted, for he was running out of ways to develop the row within the limits he had imposed, and the crude legends of part II held little appeal for him. Then, at this critical moment, he read Hill's essay and realized how great would be the room for experiment if he took up Hill's suggestion and treated the row as a mode. He wanted to try this at once, but the musical constants he had adopted for part I, with which he wished to maintain symmetry, did not permit such an approach. He would have to wait for a new work with new postulates. Within a month he was composing his Sixth String Quartet, and the oratorio was gradually forgotten.

For more than half a century the manuscript of the oratorio rested in virtually

total obscurity—in later years, among the Krenek papers in the Vienna City Library. It bore no opus number (it fell between op. 77b, *Italian Ballads*, and op. 78, the Sixth String Quartet) and for long was not listed among Krenek's works by musicologists, who were probably unaware of its existence. Then Lothar Zagrosek, principal conductor of the orchestra of the Austrian national broadcasting company (ORF) in Vienna and an enthusiastic admirer of Krenek's music, especially of his larger works, learned of its existence and determined to present it at the Salzburg Festival in the summer of 1988.

Until he saw the score he did not know that it was incomplete. Dismayed, he asked Krenek to complete it. But even if the composer could have returned to its idiom after decades working in others, Krenek was occupied with another, far larger and more complex stage work of oratorio character (the untitled opus 238, which he finished after five years of effort early in 1988); moreover, he had but little of his earlier energy and was compelled to conserve what he had for the project in hand. Thus he could not oblige. In the end they found an effective compromise. The speaker who had presented the readings from Ball in part I would offer a brief summary of Saint Simeon's life thereafter, concluding with the words "Zeit steht still. . . . Ewigkeit beginnt. . . . in ihr spiegelt sich der Inbegriff der göttlichen Allmacht: Vater, Sohn, Heiliger Geist" (Time stands still. . . . Eternity begins. . . . In it shines the essence of the Almighty: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost). This would be followed by a great chord sounded by the entire ensemble, which would gradually diminish until only the rustle created by rubbing together two blocks covered with sandpaper could be heard. Then silence.

In this form it was presented on July 27, 1988, as the major new work of the festival. Skillfully directed by Zagrosek and brilliantly performed by the ORF Chorus from Vienna, the Ensemble Modern of Frankfurt, and four superior soloists, among whom Cornelia Kallisch as the narrator was particularly effective, *Symeon der Stylit* justified one of Krenek's own favorite terms of approbation: "colossal." With the mighty ending of part I and the stupendous chord that followed the summary, it seemed entirely a thing-in-itself. There was no sense of truncation in either the text or the music. And despite the impression given by Krenek's journal, the music, however it came into being, was of the first order of eloquence, majesty, and beauty. What might have remained a curiosity known to only a few took its rightful place among the most admirable of Krenek's works.

What is more, as a close study of the score (now published by Bärenreiter) reveals, the oratorio is a significant portent, for in it can be seen in primal form features of idiom, style, and organization that would henceforth distinguish Krenek's most characteristic music. Adoption of the twelve-tone technique had been a critical step. In *Symeon*, but without the same degree of self-consciousness, Krenek took another that was less obvious but every bit as decisive: he began to make the act of composing more the fitting together of preordained configurations and less the casting

about for possibilities latent in his material. As he acknowledged many years afterward, *Symeon* was "a first attempt at [total or integral] serial music, at the predetermination of the elements."²² From now on his music would be increasingly *constructed*.

Two forces, with which the aftereffects of Hill's essay would powerfully interact, brought him to this step. The first was a fascination with recondite formulas, numerological games, and cabalistic symbols. Indications of this interest had appeared while Krenek was still a teenager, in the charts and drawings he prepared for his history of Athburg, but its real measure did not begin to show until he manipulated numbers to create the "Francis row." It was also, as has been seen, conspicuous in the lecture "Music and Mathematics" (as in his unfortunate likening of twelve-tone music to contemporary physics), which followed *Symeon* by a few months. But until now it had not been a factor of much consequence in his composing, though it doubtless contributed to his zeal in studying the twelve-tone technique and analyzing the scores of Schönberg and Berg. To be sure, when he composed the music for *Karl V*, he found it helpful to keep track of his variations on the row by means of a chart, but beyond making such choices as whether or not to use counterpoint or the canon form he had not tried to formulate in advance any aspects of the music. Now for the oratorio, not only did he seek an equation that would produce an all-interval row, but he also prepared tables of Arabic and Roman numerals to foretell the occurrence and recurrence of specific variations and sketched architectural patterns to indicate the counterbalancing of complementary musical sections.

The second force, which accorded well with the first, was the influence of Webern. Krenek was fascinated by the retrogressions, mirror images, endless canons, and other carefully wrought symmetries that he found in his friend's scores, and impressed by the starkness joined with unusual intensity in his treatment of tones and timbres. The rigor that Webern applied to his music seemed to Krenek an extension of his austere personal habits and uncompromising insistence on excellence, which Krenek admired as he admired the moral absolutism of Kraus. Of particular importance for him was Webern's Concerto for Nine Instruments, op. 24, which was completed on September 4, 1935, and performed within a month at the ISCM festival in Prague, where Krenek heard it.* In all, Webern's music and demeanor made Krenek, as he put it later, "more strict and rigorous" in his composing.²³ Henceforth his music, with some exceptions, would tend to be taut, edged, and angular, compelling rather than ingratiating, yet vibrant and impassioned: music with a severe and gleaming beauty.

Such qualities are to be seen in three major works that followed *Symeon*. Composition of the first, the String Quartet no. 6, op. 78, which Krenek began on March 8, 1936, proceeded slowly. In the spring of 1930 he had needed only two weeks to

*This work was later to be greatly admired by Boulez, Stockhausen, and their associates, who claimed to see in its first movement all the elements of total serialism.

The row of Krenek's Sixth String Quartet.



compose the Fifth String Quartet, which was approximately forty-five minutes long, but work on the Sixth, which lasted about twenty-eight minutes, spanned seven months and was not finished until October 13. Krenek's many public duties at this time certainly slowed his work, but more important were the difficulties of remaining faithful to the structural determinants he had enjoined. He hoped the work would be performed by the quartet headed by Schönberg's brother-in-law, Rudolf Kolisch, which specialized in contemporary music and had given the premieres of Schönberg's Third and Fourth String Quartets, Berg's *Lyric Suite*, and the Third and Fifth String Quartets of Bartók. But when he saw the parts, Kolisch concluded that it would take too long to prepare. Since there was at the time no other group with enough interest in twelve-tone music or skill to perform it, this work was not played in its entirety until 1953, when the Assmann Quartet presented it with great success at a recital sponsored by the Kranichsteiner Music Society in Darmstadt.

It was developed from a row that by its Webern-like symmetry furnished the means for both rich variety and a tightly interlocked structure (Ex. 8). Subdivided into two six-note groups and then further into four three-note groups whose intervals reflect one another in both inversion and retrograde, this row made possible strongly motivial effects and suggestions of leading notes and diatonic relations. Krenek emphasized these and their melodic qualities by his handling of voicing among the instruments and rhythmical patterns yet skillfully avoided configurations that might be taken for themes. Instead he made the music proceed by contrapuntal motion through a steadily evolving, continuously surprising, but still logical series of variations. In the hands of musicians who do not understand the principles of its organization and thus cannot articulate the relations that give it coherence and unity, the quartet can sound random and faltering. But when it is performed by a group such as the Thouvenel Quartet, its ingenious combination of strictly adhered to constants and revelations of new variegations provides drama and cumulative force and eloquence. On hearing the Thouvenel group perform it in the spring of 1979, Andrew Porter wrote in the *New Yorker*: "I think it is the strongest and most beautiful of the seven [quartets] and one of Krenek's finest works."^{*} He especially admired

* Krenek composed a seventh string quartet in 1943–1944, which accounts for Porter's number. A few weeks after Porter's review appeared Krenek was asked to name and rank what he regarded as his most important works (a collected edition of his works was being discussed). In the category of chamber music he gave first place to the Sixth Quartet, and he included it among the half-dozen of his finest works in any category. In 1980–1981 he composed an eighth string quartet specifically for the Thouvenel players. Fine as it was, it did not displace the Sixth in his esteem.

what he termed the “heroic” concluding fugue on four subjects.²⁴ Long, lyrical lines, sonorities that range from the luxuriously sensuous to the strained and grating, towering chords and spirited colloquies, all managed so as to seem inevitable even when most unexpected—such features make this one of the indubitable masterworks of twelve-tone music.

Twelve Variations for Piano in Three Movements, op. 79, which followed in 1937, was composed like the quartet with the hope that it might exhibit some of what Krenek later termed “the perfection that I saw in the music of Anton Webern, which in my opinion is one of the extremely rare cases in history of complete coincidence of creative imagination and strictly formulated technique.” He confessed that he felt he had

approached this ideal only in a few isolated moments, for there has always been in my musical concepts an element of vitality that seemed to tend toward breaking through any set of limitations, be it of a traditional or of an unorthodox type. . . . In the Variations and in the Sixth Quartet I accomplished a degree of constructive consistency which I had hardly reached before, but the musical substance so organized seemed of too stony a texture to serve as a medium of sufficient flexibility for expression of a reasonably wide range of moods.²⁵

It was this element of vitality that produced what Adorno in his account of Krenek’s physiognomy had termed wild, meaningless, uncontrolled, and shocking. It was manifested, too, in Krenek’s delight with Cocteau’s impudence, his feeling of kinship with rogues and rebels such as Jonny, his light ridicule of the twelve-tone technique before he himself adopted it, and his amusing essay “Aus Gründen der Kontrolle,” in which he made fun of the pomposities of the manager and staff of a Berlin hotel. Given the climate of the times and the seriousness with which Krenek defended his political and artistic beliefs and values, not much had been seen of this aspect of his nature lately, especially in the guise of the comic spirit, but it was a force strong enough to make him impatient with the restraints of the Webern aesthetic, even as he profoundly admired it and tried to apply it.

Be that as it may, the variations do indeed show a remarkable measure of constructive consistency. They are built on a single pattern of successive chords that, after an interval between variations six and seven, return on themselves retrogressively, as indicated in Fig. 1. Even the succession of methods used to derive the variations from the original row formed a serial pattern—also based on the original row! In all, the variations provide a vivid illustration of Krenek’s proclivity for puzzles and the influence of Webern, although, the preordination aside, Krenek was actually much less strict than his new mentor would have been. He seems in places to have been trying to see how many different things he could do with the row despite the limitations imposed by such intricate uniformity. Claudia Maurer Zenck comments:

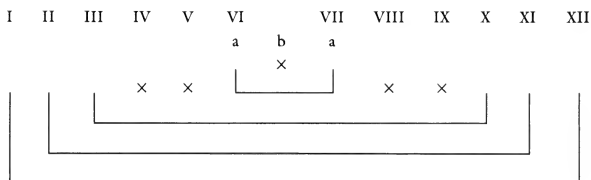


FIG. 1. The structure of Krenek's Sixth String Quartet. × signifies that the unit is independent; ┌ ┐ signifies a mirror relationship. (Variation XII is the retrograde of I, and so forth.) From Claudia Maurer Zenck, *Ernst Krenek. Ein Komponist im Exil* (Vienna: Lafite Verlag, 1980), 176.

In contrast to Webern, he does not confine himself to a structural interpretation of the row but brings phrase technique and concern with motifs into accord and lets them remain as two factors in its variation. In this regard he uses the row technique more strictly than Schönberg but holds firmly to the end to the difference between inherent form [*Gestalt*] and structure. He does not compose the row; he composes with it. Adorno would never have been able to reproach him, as he did Webern, for regarding it as a fetish. Both the composer [Krenek] and the philosopher [Adorno] proceeded from the same assumption: that composition, even in the extreme case of twelve-tone music, implied the realization of inherent form.²⁶

Or, as Krenek expressed it in his lectures, the composer should let the musical idea find its own axioms. Thus, according to Zenck's view, when motivial material returns in retrograde it is because Krenek wished to explore the musical potential, not because he felt compelled slavishly to transcribe an exact mirror image: that is, the use of the retrograde was an axiom leading to the realization of the work's unique inherent form. In view of the meticulous symmetries of the work as we have it, the distinction Zenck makes may seem trivial, but in fact it is absolutely fundamental to the nature of Krenek's creative imagination and his attitude toward his music. Even here he retains his right to do as he pleases—and it pleases him to discover what the symmetries will yield. Nevertheless, the variations do give, far more so than the quartet, the impression of the mechanical application of formulas: brilliant, yes, but “stony.”

The third major work, Krenek's Piano Concerto no. 2, op. 81, was composed between May 25 and August 22, 1937, and, with Krenek at the keyboard and Bruno Walter conducting, was first performed the following March in Amsterdam, where it was received very coolly. Leaving aside the suite taken from *Karl V*, this was Krenek's first major work for orchestra since the First Piano Concerto of 1923, the few orchestral works in the interim being lightweight things like *Potpourri*, op. 54 (1927), and *Little Symphony*, op. 58 (1928).

The Second Piano Concerto begins with much promise. Krenek devised a row

with ample motival, even quasi-melodic, possibilities. Traced across a canopy of somber orchestral colors, it roused expectations of intensities and drama such as those of the Second Symphony. But the music seemed to get lost in a tangle and then, on emerging, merely to plod along. Missing for long stretches were the qualities that had made his earlier orchestral works compelling: sensitivity to the timbres and colorific effects of the various instrumental combinations, linear grace and naturalness (even where, as in the Sixth Quartet, the strictures of the technique did not permit true melody), brilliant contrapuntal writing, rhythmic complexity, shocks from unexpected progressions, and a strong forward surge. Instead of the vehement conjunctions and disjunctions that gave his other large-scale orchestral works their eloquence and excitement, one heard merely disagreeable, even meaningless, assemblages of notes that seemed to have been bracketed not in accordance with a *musical* idea but in obedience to a recondite diagram. It was as if this time Krenck had been betrayed by his predilection for numbers and puzzles and had limited himself to a "structural interpretation."

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As these momentous changes were taking place in his music, Krenck was engaged with a prodigious outpouring of essays and reviews. His friend Edwin Rollett enjoyed great freedom in editing the literary page of the *Wiener Zeitung*, and, impressed with Krenck's ease and fluency as an essayist, he invited him to write for the paper on whatever he pleased. Between his first appearance there in February 1934 and his last, just one week before Hitler marched into Austria in March 1938, Krenck contributed 142 items, of which 48 were true essays and the rest reviews of books, films, and concerts. Unlike the earlier pieces he had contributed to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, most of these were not political, in spite of his involvement with Winter's group and the undiminished concern for Austria manifest in his public activities, but rather commentaries on the arts and the social scene or travel essays, at which he excelled.

Ever since the days when he had visited cousins near Innsbruck he had enjoyed traveling, and, though not much given to physical activity, he liked hiking in the mountains and wandering through cities and their suburbs, as he had with friends during his Berlin days. He enjoyed the life of resort hotels (for he appreciated having others do for him), where he spent part of every summer. He even liked the hours he spent on trains, which for him were powerfully evocative symbols of freedom, new opportunities, and romance. At the end of the ultimate railroad of his imagination lay California, whose very name was magical for him, conjuring up images of sunny beaches and deserts, exotic foliage, youthful exuberance, and carefree living. Just the titles of such works as *Reisebuch*, *Ballad of the Railroads*, *Santa Fe Timetable*, *Wenn Sardakai auf Reisen geht* (Sardakai takes a trip), and *Flaschenpost*

vom Paradies, oder Der englische Ausflug (Bottled message from paradise, or the English excursion) convey the stimulation that the thought of travel gave him.

Like Henry James, who also excelled at travel essays, he had a “painter’s eye,” which he used to good purpose in the many watercolors of Death Valley and the Anza-Borrego Desert of California that he made later in life. His visual acuity helps to explain his lifelong interest in film and his unusually close attention to cinematic techniques, which profoundly affected the way he envisioned events in his operas. He followed notices of new films and tried to see any that reliable critics praised, even traveling many miles when necessary.

Before making a journey of any consequence he prepared by reading—more likely in the literature of a region than in its history or descriptions of its scenery or people. He almost never carried a guidebook, depending instead on his skills as an observer, and he tended to keep apart from others unless he was visiting friends. Such aloofness affected the content of his travel pieces, as it had his accounts of rambling around Berlin while a student there. Both his pure travel pieces and his social commentaries are like many a fine travel film—excellent in capturing appearances and as much of human deportment as shows on the surface. He made occasional generalizations about conspicuous social and cultural patterns, but he did not often look *behind* behavior for motives, feelings, or beliefs. He never reported conversations or mentioned personal encounters, and his accounts, even when treating crowded scenes, seem, paradoxically, empty of people. Even when intentionally humorous they are not frivolous—Krenek was too acute for that—but they are severely limited. They are brilliant miniatures.

A unique opportunity to use his gifts arose while he was composing his Sixth String Quartet. In 1932 the musicologist H. F. Redlich had sent him a copy of his newly published book on Monteverdi’s madrigals. This awakened Krenek’s interest, and he began to study Monteverdi’s music in a magnificent edition prepared by the Italian composer Gian Francesco Malipiero, of which he spoke enthusiastically to friends. Paul Czongka, a Hungarian conductor and opera director who was an associate of Krenek in the Vienna ISCM, heard him and suggested that he prepare a shortened version of Monteverdi’s *Coronation of Poppea* for use by the Salzburg Opera Guild, which Czongka had founded, on a forthcoming tour of the United States. (The company had no connection with Salzburg but used its name because Americans associated it with music. Later, and quite coincidentally, Czongka rented a castle near Salzburg for rehearsals.)

Krenek agreed and set to work in the spring of 1936, preparing a German translation of the libretto and making many cuts. He also added reeds and brasses to the traditional strings and continuo. Then, as the company was preparing to leave early in the autumn of 1937, the American impresario Sol Hurok, who had arranged the tour, insisted that Krenek come along, as his was the only known name. Actually, there was nothing for him to do. He had refused to conduct the score because he

thought too little time had been allowed for rehearsals, and Max Sturzenegger had been engaged for the job. Still, Hurok was implacable. Given this chance to see America—including California—Krenek agreed to go, provided he need only check on performances from time to time and would be free to make excursions on his own. After a shaky but successful premiere in Vienna with Herta Glatz in the title role, the company left for New York, arriving there on October 17, 1937.

Accompanied by Berta, Krenek made the rounds of the city's tourist attractions, gazing with awe at the towers of Radio City, noting in his diary the mechanical precision of the Rockettes, and taxiing up to Harlem to listen to jazz and watch the dancing at the Savoy Ballroom. (The diary, which he began on October 3, makes no mention of visits to the Metropolitan Museum or other shrines of culture.) After a performance of *Poppea* that Krenek thought inferior, though both audience and critics received it well, the company set off for other parts while the Kreneks headed for California, visiting Salt Lake City and Zion Canyon on the way.

They reached Los Angeles on December 12; the weather was sunny and mild, and Krenek found himself among his own kind of people—Schönberg, whom he now met for the first time at the home of Otto Klemperer, the former director of the Kroll Opera in Berlin and presently conductor of the Los Angeles Symphony; Ernst Toller; Rudolf Kolisch; Kurt Weill; and George Antheil and his wife, with whom the Kreneks spent Christmas and New Year's Eve. Krenek visited the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios, where he watched Norma Shearer rehearsing *Marie Antoinette* (he thought it "humbug"); talked with Antheil about doing a film on Salzburg, for which he would provide the score; coped with hangovers (he was partial to American whiskey); and did a read-through of his Second Piano Concerto with the Los Angeles Symphony. Klemperer, however, had announced his program for the season and could not take this opportunity for an American premiere with the composer as soloist. Still, Krenek thought he was, as he put it, "in Paradise," and decided that he would gladly spend the rest of his life here. Even Schönberg, about whom Krenek had by now written several admiring essays, was cordial. Moreover, the news reaching him from home was ominous. Hitler was becoming more insistent on a union with Germany, and the Austrian Nazis, who had been granted amnesty earlier in the year, were saying openly that it was only a matter of time before it took place. In his New Year's prayer Krenek asked God to guard his country's freedom and keep it from war.²⁷

By now his English, which he had started learning with the help of Anna Mahler, had so improved that he was able to give a brief talk in San Francisco on January 12, 1938, at a semiprivate performance of his Twelve Variations for Piano, and another talk at the University of California on the 15th on the twelve-tone technique. At month's end he and Berta took the train east, where he lectured on modern European music at Princeton, Yale, Smith, and Columbia, and between times saw many films and visited with Schnabel, who was considering settling in the United States

(and did the next year), and with Adorno, who had followed Max Horkheimer and the Institute for Social Research to Columbia. To pass the time and save future bother, he also stopped at the Austrian Consulate and renewed his passport—a most providential bit of foresight, as it turned out.

When the company set sail on the *Normandie* on March 2, Krenek could look back with satisfaction. He had seen much of the country, including some of the most spectacular parts of the West, he had acquired considerable fluency in English, and he had obtained a commitment from Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony to perform the Second Piano Concerto in Boston and New York at some future time. As a nice touch, he had been offered a job at the Malkin Conservatory by the same man who had taken in Schönberg in 1936. After an easy crossing, the Kreneks disembarked at Le Havre on March 7 and went at once to Paris to spend a few days before moving on to Brussels for a performance of *Reisebuch* on the 12th.

He brought back good things for Rollett. Americans made good copy; in fact, he began writing about them even before he visited the United States. In “Amerikanisches Barock” (American baroque), published in the *Wiener Zeitung* on October 28, 1934, he showed both his film sense and his shrewdness as an observer when he compared the “infinite” heaven created by trick photography for a revue sequence in *42nd Street* with the ceiling of an Austrian baroque church, calling the first a grotesque reversal in which a decorator fills the sky with female bodies in place of angels and creates a universe of mindless, brilliant humbug. In “Micky und Silly” (*Wiener Zeitung*, January 1, 1935), he pointed out the ambiguities in the ethos of Disney cartoons, in which hard work is depicted as both triumphant and foolish and modern technology as a collection of spectacular supertoys for grown-up children.

In the essays based on his journey across the United States, Krenek endeavored to be more than entertaining. “Zur amerikanischen Mentalität” (On the American mentality), published in three parts on December 19 and 25, 1937, and January 15, 1938, he described Americans as money-grubbing, commercial-minded, and ignorant. Although he pointed to aspects of America that invite satire and laughter, he tried to avoid a patronizing tone and instead considered seriously what these traits might signify. In the United States, he wrote, people envision the problems of life in terms of business; whatever cannot be seen this way is judged to be of no interest or moment. Art, for example, is a business; artists are not regarded as high priests, and no attention is paid to any insights into the nature of reality that their work might offer. In fact, truly dedicated artists are treated as troublemakers, regardless of talk about the nation’s need for men of vision—which turns out to be mere ingenuity in advertising and public relations.

“Amerikanische Landschaft” (The American landscape), published on February 8, 1938, was for the most part a vivid word-painting of Zion Canyon and the surrounding territory. After describing the utter emptiness of the wintry land, Kre-

nek was moved to speculate that when nature exceeds a certain measure it becomes a hindrance to the development of culture. A train rushing through a region so vast contributes no more to the environment than does a ship on the sea. Perhaps if the era of foot and wagon travel had not passed so quickly, a slower-moving people might have left a mark on this wilderness. It occurred to him that size might explain why little Greece was the cradle of Western civilization, whereas "monstrous" places such as Africa and America seem, despite all civilizing measures, to shrug off culture. "American Mixed Grill" (March 4 and 5, 1938), the last of Krenek's essays that Rollett published, recaptured the gaiety and badinage of *Sprung über den Schatten* and *Schwergewicht* with its entertaining description of American drugstores, ritualized behavior on elevators, Californian funeral practices (anticipating Evelyn Waugh), and peculiarities of language, as in "funeral *parlor*" and "beauty *parlor*."

It is easy to misjudge Krenek's pieces on America. On the one hand, those acquainted with the country in those years can readily find fault with his generalizations from too few instances, his oversimplifications, his reiterations of European clichés about materialism. On the other hand, the elegant simplicity and vivid imagery of Krenek's prose must have charmed his Viennese readers; indeed, his many unexpected and shrewd perceptions—such as his comment that the speed of the westward movement tended to obliterate traces of a human presence—tempt one to attach more value to the essays than they truly deserve. Yet their excellences do bear out what his best political pieces, such as the mighty "Zwischen 'Blubo' und 'Asphalt,'" and his skillfully wrought notes on drama and opera of the Kassel and Wiesbaden days had shown earlier; had Krenek accepted Gubler's invitation in 1931 he might well have had an outstanding career as a writer.

Considering the unwaveringly high quality of his style, his copiousness is truly astonishing. Even while composing more works than most modern composers (his output is three times that of Stravinsky, six times that of Schönberg, and fifteen times that of Berg), Krenek over his lifetime has written nearly three hundred essays, *not* counting reviews. About two-thirds of these appeared between 1925 and 1938, of which the majority are about music, opera, drama, and film, though there are many travel pieces describing journeys to Switzerland, Spain, Italy, the Vorarlberg, Greece, even Brazil. Reading Krenek's essays, which he wrote both in German and, especially after 1938, in English, has been likened to "listening to the discourse of a perceptive, somewhat skeptical, and amusing gentleman; a well-bred conversationalist who paid others the compliment of assuming in them a cosmopolitanism equal to his own."²⁸

Over the years Krenek often said that Kraus was his model as an essayist and the strongest influence on his style. This is borne out in the German pieces by the puns and other forms of wordplay, the rich allusiveness, and the resolute paring away of all needless ornamentation, though Krenek's prose is simpler and more lucid than Kraus's, and it lacks the Krausian rage. In their writing habits the two differed

greatly. Whereas Kraus would agonize for hours over the placing of a comma, Krenek's manuscripts show that he wrote his pieces straight off without recourse to outlines or rough drafts—which may account for their conversational tone and ease. Krenek was always quick to notice the grotesque and absurd; yet even when he treated it for comic effect, he, unlike Kraus, was not contemptuous. Except in his most urgent political pieces he always maintained a patrician air of mildly ironic detachment.

His gifts were recognized not only by Gubler and Rollett but also by Willi Reich, his collaborator on 23, who had hoped to publish a compilation of Krenek's essays as early as 1932. Nothing came of this plan, but three years later Krenek and Reich worked together on a collection to represent the Catholic left, again to no avail. There matters stood until the mid-fifties, when Friedrich Saathen, a Viennese music writer and editor who admired Krenek's music and writings and knew nothing about these earlier efforts, decided to assemble his own collection. As the editor of the *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* he had made contact with Krenek as early as 1946 and in the early fifties had nominated him for the Music Prize of the City of Vienna (which Krenek eventually received in 1955 after Saathen had left the jury); over the years he had kept copies of many of Krenek's essays, and he found others in the Vienna City Library and among the papers kept by Krenek's mother. On learning of his plans Krenek sent later pieces from America, which Saathen himself translated into German. Eventually, in 1958 and 1959, two volumes, *Zur Sprache gebracht* (Put into words) and *Gedanken unterwegs* (Thoughts along the way), were published by the Munich firm of Albert Langen-Georg Müller to highly favorable reviews in leading Austrian, German, and Swiss papers. H. H. Stuckenschmidt, reviewing *Gedanken unterwegs* in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, called Krenek a writer of high rank who would have made his way as such had he not become a composer.

Saathen had a contract for three volumes, and in 1965 *Prosa, Dramen, Verse* appeared, a collection of libretti, texts of songs, and "Die drei Mäntel des Anton K.," the original version of Krenek's story "The Three Overcoats of Anton K." Unfortunately, Saathen's name was omitted from the title page, and because Krenek wrote a short introduction, many have assumed that he edited the volume himself.

In 1974 and 1977 two volumes of Krenek's *Das musikdramatische Werk* (The music-drama work), edited by Franz Eugen Dostal and containing the libretti of all the operas down to *The Clock Tower*, were released. The publishers, Österreichische Verlagsanstalt of Vienna, eventually issued a third volume containing the rest in 1990. In 1984, however, Europaverlag of Vienna brought out *Im Zweifelsfalle* (In case of doubt), a collection of Krenek's best pieces on opera, composers, and the laws of art. These amply justify Stuckenschmidt's judgment regarding Krenek's place as a writer and demonstrate that quite apart from his music he is a learned and agreeable essayist who might well have become a major figure in that genre.

But of course one cannot read the essays "quite apart from his music." One is

inescapably aware that they are the work of one of the century's foremost composers, and so they take on additional significance and value. As this writer has put it:

They delineate for us the society, the culture, the historical setting, and the musical ambience within which his creative imagination worked, and thereby our understanding and appreciation are enhanced and our judgment made more authentic. . . . The mind that maintained and acted on these views is the mind that created [the] Sixth String Quartet. To know the modes of that mind, to know its proclivity for precision, for clarity of outline, for formal control, for detachment, for irony; to know its loyalty, its seriousness, its occasional somberness and touches of melancholy beneath the often brilliant persiflage—to know all this is to possess a kind of subliminal knowledge which facilitates one's comprehension of the Quartet

—and indeed, all the music of his maturity. Considering the music that followed, one cannot regret Krenek's choice in 1931, but one can be grateful that so many essays exist, both for their own high merits and for the way, directly and indirectly, they enable us better to understand and appreciate the music and the measure of his achievement.²⁹

Yet—if Krenek had gone straight home after disembarking in France, if he had not been in Brussels on March 12, there might have been no more essays, no more music. For on that day Hitler and his troops crossed the border into Austria, where they were welcomed with extravagant enthusiasm. The next day Austria officially became part of the German Reich. “Blubo” had triumphed, and Krenek was a marked man.

9 · A MODERNIST IN AMERICA: 1939–1942

On July 25, 1934, Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, the one public figure who might have sustained enough national pride to resist union with Germany, was assassinated by Austrian Nazis. He was succeeded by Kurt von Schuschnigg, a man deeply divided between loyalty to Austria and loyalty to German culture.

Krenek's first reaction on hearing of Dollfuss's death was to wonder how far it was to the Swiss border, for he expected the Nazis to take over at once with support from Hitler. But Hitler was not yet powerful enough to help them, especially in the face of an alliance signed by Italy, Hungary, and Austria that made Mussolini the guarantor of Austrian freedom. Despite the explosive forces just below the surface, a period of calm—the period of Krenek's public activity—set in after the first shock over Dollfuss's death. Hoping to maintain that calm, Schuschnigg tried to propitiate Hitler and his Austrian admirers by signing, on July 11, 1936, an agreement that gave Austrian Nazis freedom to rally and publish. On January 15, 1937, he granted amnesty to all Austrian Nazis indicted or imprisoned for their political activities.

A year later they were ready to move. On February 4, 1938, Hitler assumed command of the German army. On the 12th Schuschnigg conferred with him, making many concessions, including the admission of Austrian Nazis into the government on the 15th. Five days later riots broke out in Graz following a speech in which Hitler called for German unity. Schuschnigg at once sent federal troops to Graz, but events were getting ahead of him. On the 24th he gave a moving speech to the Austrian Parliament in which he attacked the Nazis for putting party loyalty above loyalty to the nation and declared that Austria was determined to remain free. The speech was resoundingly approved throughout the nation. On March 4, two days after Krenek set sail for home, Schuschnigg announced that a national plebi-

scite on the future of the nation would take place on the 13th. On March 10, three days after Krenek landed at Le Havre, Hitler sent word to the Austrian Nazis that he would back them on anything they did. The next day Schuschnigg asked for help from England, France, and Italy. All three turned him down. He called off the plebiscite and, shortly before midnight, resigned.

The Nazis took over the government. The next day Hitler crossed into Austria to a welcome as great as that given a fortnight earlier to Schuschnigg's defiant speech. On the 14th he entered Vienna, and the next day over two hundred thousand gathered in the Heldenplatz to hail him. Within hours, seventy-six thousand people—Schuschnigg and his cabinet, monarchists, leftists, intellectuals, artists—had been arrested, as Krenek surely would have been were he not out of the country. On April 10 a plebiscite, in which everyone not in jail took part, approved the *Anschluss* by 99.08 percent of the votes cast.

Throughout the fortnight before he sailed, Krenek had followed the news from home in extreme agitation, though at times, as when he read Schuschnigg's address to Parliament, his spirits rose. When Schuschnigg sent three battalions to put down an enormous rally in Graz, Krenek wrote in his diary: "God, help it to succeed. . . . Give us victory! Guard my fatherland from the Nazis. . . . Dear God, help!" He was in Brussels on the day of the *Anschluss* and, well aware of the extreme poignancy involved, participated in a broadcast of his *Reisebuch* cycle. He also sent Rollett three more essays on America, which were never used. He realized, he wrote to his parents, that he could not return to Vienna. Had he failed to understand this then, it would have been made plain enough on May 22, when, at the opening of an exhibition of "degenerate art" in Düsseldorf, he was named with Schönberg, Stravinsky, Hindemith, Berg, Schreker, Eisler, and Weill as a "cultural bolshevik." His world had collapsed. His friends were either dead, as Kraus and Berg, scattered, as Adorno, Bach, Stefan, and Schnabel, or so withdrawn as to be virtually in hiding, as Winter, Webern, Erdmann, and Heinsheimer. He himself faced social and artistic isolation, poverty, even the possibility of imprisonment.

Within a matter of days he decided to emigrate to America and set about obtaining the necessary papers. In New York, Mark Brunswick, the American composer who had been a member of the Vienna chapter of the ISCM, and Carl Engel, president of G. Schirmer, Inc., signed affidavits for him. In Vienna, his parents went to the police and were given papers saying that Krenek and his wife wished to travel in America and had no blemishes on their records. Apparently the police did not realize how he stood with the Nazis. Then, by frantically writing as many as eight or ten letters a day, he managed to obtain a visa for America on May 12, and although Berta still did not have one, they bought passage to Montreal. Now they had to sustain themselves until mid-August, when they would sail.

As his diary and letters to his parents and the Gublers testify, this was for Krenek a period of bewilderment, intense anxiety, and sadness. He was fearful of falling

into the hands of the Nazis, and Berta (whose visa came through in June) was frightened by the prospect of living in America. Buying their ship fares had almost exhausted their money. Krenek earned a little by performing the Second Piano Concerto in Zürich, Lugano, and Helsinki—where audience enthusiasm was greater than at the premiere in Amsterdam—but not enough to cover travel expenses and the cost of living in hotels. He tried to earn more by lecturing, even taking American films as a subject that might please, but few people came to hear him.

Friends tried to help. John Davenport, an English writer whom Krenek had met in Los Angeles, arranged free housing for him when he came to England to perform the concerto with Adrian Boult in April. (Krenek found England extremely confusing and felt more at home in America. To make matters worse, he lost his passport and was almost paralyzed with fear until it turned up.) Later that month the Gublers invited the Kreneks to stay with them in Zürich, and once there Krenek was again the beneficiary of Werner Reinhart's generosity toward composers he admired. Reinhart gave him one thousand Swiss francs and invited him to use the Château Muzot, near Sierre, where Rilke had lived. Soothed by such loyalty and the quiet of the château, Krenek sketched one of his most frequently performed works, *Twelve Short Piano Pieces in the Twelve-Tone Technique*, op. 83, and began writing a long short story, "The Three Overcoats of Anton K.," his only completed work of fiction.*

He was not thinking of publication when he wrote this story, and it was not published until 1953, when it appeared in a translation by Krenek himself in the *New Mexico Quarterly*. He merely wanted to relieve tensions that made composing difficult. With this aim he based much of the action on his experiences when visiting Dutch, Swedish, English, Finnish, Czech, Swiss, and American consulates to obtain visas, in this way exorcising some of the anxieties of these nightmarish times. Throughout the weeks before the Kreneks sailed, work on the story in hotel rooms and even aboard a coastal steamer provided solace as he hurried between concerts and lectures, and he completed it by their departure. Later, still in great need of money, Krenek thought of expanding it into a full-length novel by having his protagonist emigrate to America, but no publisher showed interest, so he abandoned the idea.

Anton K., whose last name we never learn, although the initial is intentionally significant, lives outside his native land and thus depends on visas, official letters, and other documents to travel. He makes a journey beyond the border of the country where he resides and learns that to return he needs a special letter. His

*Despite his writing skills and his ability, repeatedly shown in his libretti, to invent stories, Krenek made only two other excursions into fiction: the Athburg fragments of his boyhood and an undated beginning of a fantasy entitled "Ant Story," which was written in English sometime after his emigration. The six-page manuscript is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

efforts to obtain this letter, which the postal authorities refuse to turn over to him, lead to confusions that result in his picking up the wrong overcoat in a café. Eventually his own overcoat is returned to him, and there in one of its pockets is the letter. Fearful of further entanglements with hostile bureaucrats, he wonders what he should do now. Use it to put himself right with the law? Demand that the police investigate how the letter came to be in his lost overcoat? As he stands on a bridge overlooking a muddy river and ponders his next move, he suddenly thinks, "If the meaning of human existence really consists in running from one office to another carrying miserable slips of paper to and fro, then it was indeed better to step over the railing of the bridge and rest forever at the bottom of the dirty stream." He tears up the letter and turns toward a city in which he had during his ordeal come upon a mysterious woman toward whom he was deeply attracted. (She conformed closely to Karl Kraus's conception of *das Ewig-weibliche* as being all feeling, intuition, sexuality, and thus the source of creativity and life itself.)¹ For better or worse, Anton K. has become his own man.

The superbly handled story proceeds on three levels. The simplest is the account of the protagonist's struggles and defiant self-assertion. The second is concerned with the effort to maintain one's identity, which is dependent on one's being free to make choices and accept the consequences. It also depends on participation in a community of real human beings, not simply officials of an inhuman system; thus, in electing to destroy the letter and turn back to the city and the woman, Anton K. reaches out toward such a community. The last and deepest level of meaning involves a struggle for his soul, for one of the officials Anton K. confronts may have been the Devil. The miraculous appearance of the letter gives him a chance to save himself from accommodation with evil. Significantly, Anton K.—who resembles Max in *Jonny*—turns from death toward Woman as Life, as Max turned toward Anita. We are not told what becomes of him after he has made his choice. All we know is that he has preserved his identity, his humanity, his soul.

Told in the third person, the story is presented entirely from Anton K.'s point of view, which has the effect of emphasizing his inner response to the baffling external events and focusing attention on his imperiled identity, his selfhood. It also allows much to happen that Anton K. does not understand and for which, given his manner of treatment, Krenek did not need to supply an explanation. What counts is not the outer reality but the inner confusion and anxiety. In this way an atmosphere of inexplicable, preternatural menace is maintained. Nor is there need to develop other characters beyond the scope of Anton K.'s perceptions of them. They remain faceless; we learn nothing of their motives or their purpose. Calling on his painter's eye and skill in depicting appearances, Krenek makes them and the dark, fog-enshrouded setting through which they move unusually present and visible, yet at the same time manages to keep open the possibility that they embody supernatural

forces. The visually realistic details are so handled that instead of contradicting the surreal they make it all the more mysterious and frightening. Krenek shows a mastery of narrative technique that many an experienced craftsman might envy, though he himself was not a great reader or close student of fiction.

He did know well the writings of Kafka, whose influence is apparent throughout this story. (As if to emphasize this when they published it, the editors of the *New Mexico Quarterly* placed a drawing by Kafka on the page facing the opening.) The story's setting is Kafka's world of narrow, sunless streets, overcrowded and airless. This is truly his City. Anton K. is strikingly like Josef K. of *The Trial* in his feeling of pervasive guilt despite his innocence and his sense of outrage. And as in Kafka's fiction, "A world of hierarchy provides, negatively, for deferment of responsibility or indefinite retreat. . . . One is passed from office to office . . . only to find that the proper official to handle the complaint is out of town or the necessary documents are lost or one's claim is outlawed."² But there is a great difference: for Kafka's protagonist there is no escape. His loneliness, exclusion, and helplessness are absolute, and in his despair he cooperates in his own destruction. Anton K. may not escape, but he has his moment of autonomy. This, then, is no simple, if remarkably acute, imitation of Kafka. In several significant ways it is, in fact, Krenek's own story. Despite his fears, his depression, his tendency toward self-pity, he, too, was taking his fate in his hands and reaching for life.

Even as he wrote there came a spur to hope: *Karl V* was given its premiere performance at the German Theater in Prague on June 22, 1938, and scored a triumph. Krenek had wanted to attend. Radio Prague offered to pay his expenses, and the Germans made no trouble over his traveling through their country to get there. But in the end he worried so that he would somehow end up in Nazi custody that he chose instead to attend the ISCM festival in London, where his *Cantata on the Transitoriness of Earthly Things*, op. 72 (1932), enjoyed a brilliant and ironically apt success. He did not see a production of *Karl V* until after the war.

At the festival he met the conductor Paul Sacher, head of the Swiss delegation. A wealthy and generous man, Sacher—who had been impressed by the score of the Second Piano Concerto and a cycle of five songs for voice and piano with texts by Kafka (op. 82), which Krenek had composed while touring the United States—invited the Kreneks to stay at his home in Zürich during the last days before their departure. They spent August 15–17 with him, and during this interval he commissioned an orchestra work. Shortly before this Krenek said goodbye to his parents in Neuveville. They had sold a few trinkets to pay for the journey from Vienna, and Reinhart took care of some other expenses so that they could stay longer. They talked hopefully of a reunion in the United States, but as it turned out this was the last time Krenek saw his father. He and Berta departed on August 18 and boarded the *Ausonia* in Le Havre the next day. Their crossing was easy, but Berta was ill and

thinking already of returning, and Krenek was dispirited. How, he wrote in his diary, could he ever command respect among a people given to the endless pursuit of naive, stupid pleasures which they termed "tremendous fun"?

They disembarked at Montreal and on August 29 entered the United States, settling in the New Hampshire village of East Jaffrey, which they had chosen because the map showed it to be near Mount Monadnock (it was far in fact from being a mountain as Krenek knew the term). The autumn foliage was unusually beautiful, but the news that France and England were preparing to give in to Hitler's demands for the Sudetenland drove Krenek's spirits still lower. (The Munich Pact was signed one month later.) On September 14, faced with the choice of moving on or facing starvation, they took a room at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Boston—not quite the place for a destitute pair, but the name was familiar (though in a letter Krenek called it the "Fritz-Carlton"). To lighten their mood they went to a Harold Lloyd movie but found it amusing only in spots. Five days later, on September 19, Krenek began teaching composition at the Malkin Conservatory.

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Nineteen thirty-eight had seen the arrival in the United States not only of Krenek but of Hanns Eisler, Eduard Steuermann, Alexander Schneider, Hans Heinsheimer, and Krenek's old classmate Karol Rathaus as well. Schönberg, Weill, Pisk, Erich Korngold, Rudolf Kolisch, Rudolf Serkin, Otto Klemperer, and Adorno were already there, and Paul Bekker, with whom Krenek had worked in Kassel and Wiesbaden, had been living in New York at the time of his death in 1937. Over the next two years Schnabel, Hindemith, Milhaud, and Bartók would join the ranks of composers, concert stars, and musicologists who fled to America to escape the Nazis. Internationally recognized figures such as Schnabel and Klemperer had little difficulty finding employment. Stravinsky's name was well known and his works were performed often enough to keep him in comfortable circumstances; and following a couple of false starts Weill made a major hit with his operetta *Knickerbocker Holiday*, which opened on Broadway just a few days after Krenek reached Boston. Heinsheimer quickly obtained a position at the American headquarters of Boosey and Hawkes. But others, particularly the composers, found the going difficult. American colleagues who followed the affairs of the ISCM might know their names and try to help, as Mark Brunswick had helped with Krenek's visa, but to most Americans they were just so many foreigners looking for work. Unless they managed to break into the entertainment industry, as Weill had in New York and Korngold in Hollywood, there was little market for their music.

When he crossed the border, Krenek had only seventy-four dollars to his name; yet he enjoyed more assets than most. He was comparatively young for one with his experience; he was in fine health; and he was endowed with exceptional creative

energy. He could work in a wide variety of media, which should make it easier to adapt to any opportunities coming his way. He was an accomplished pianist—not so much so that he could earn a living as a recitalist, as Schnabel and Serkin were doing, but he was certainly good enough to present his own music well. He was an excellent essayist. He read English easily and spoke it well enough to lecture. He had had some administrative experience. And, as events would show, he had the qualities of an excellent teacher. Finally, he had friends and admirers in positions of influence: Carl Engel; Heinsheimer; Brunswick, who was now chairman of the National Committee for Refugee Musicians; Roger Sessions, who had made Krenek's acquaintance while living in Europe and was now on the faculty of Princeton and head of the American section of the ISCM; Antheil in the film industry; and Schönberg, now a full-time faculty member at the University of California, Los Angeles.

But there were liabilities. Berta was hypochondriacal, fearful of her surroundings, and inclined to melancholy. She was now fifty-three years old, and the difference in their ages was beginning to tell. In music Krenek was hobbled by his commitment to the twelve-tone technique. While modernism, even of the mildest kind, was generally disliked (though, as Hindemith would soon show, there were some notable exceptions), twelve-tone music was either unknown or abhorred. Olin Downes, the principal music critic for the *New York Times* and by way of his pontifical lecturing and broadcasting a figure of immense influence throughout the land, mistrusted any music more progressive than Sibelius's and had denounced the twelve-tone technique as a Central European aberration beyond which America had progressed some time ago. If not supported by Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration, orchestras, ballets, and opera companies were wholly dependent on wealthy benefactors, whose tastes were almost always conservative. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge and Lincoln Kirstein were unusual in their willingness to support experimental works in the performing arts. Thus, when Heinsheimer tried to obtain an engagement for Krenek as soloist with the Minneapolis Symphony, its conductor, Dimitri Mitropoulos, who knew some of Krenek's music and admired it, and who certainly was not timid, wrote back: "With the new spirit coming"—by which he meant a burgeoning "America first" nationalism—"I am afraid Mr. Krenek as well as Mr. Hindemith are too big for Minneapolis."³ In all, it seemed unlikely that Krenek could earn a living simply by composing and performing.

Oddly, given the circumstances, Krenek's greatest liabilities—his inherent passivity (to which his Austrian activism was an uncharacteristic exception) and his dependence on strong personalities such as Kraus—did not yet show themselves. Engel was such a dominating figure. So were Sessions and Ernst Karl Winter, who was now in New York and talking about establishing an Austrian Institute. But Krenek, through clumsy maneuvers to have his music published, would soon deeply offend Engel. Sessions was respected within the profession but was not in a position to get

Krenek's music performed because he was regarded by Downes and others as being too European himself. As for Winter, Krenek had decided after talking with him in New York that his ideas were "lost in the abyss."

Nevertheless, he had recovered from his depression and was full of enthusiasm. It helped that he truly liked Americans despite what he had written while in low spirits. He had enjoyed his lecture-recitals when on leave from the *Poppea* company and looked forward to doing more. And he had a job.

Joseph Malkin was a kindly optimist whose heart went out to those forced to leave their homelands, but his little conservatory did not offer Krenek much by way of an American beginning. Krenek had only two students, whom he found to be quite unprepared and who he decided were without talent. (He was wrong about one, Harold Shapero, then just eighteen, who would soon distinguish himself after studying with Walter Piston at Harvard.) They wanted to proceed directly to writing piano sonatas, even though they had not yet studied form, and were upset when Krenek insisted that they work at counterpoint—so much so that after a few weeks the second student withdrew.

Having few time constraints with only one student and still imbued with confidence, Krenek set to work arranging lecture and recital engagements. Using contacts he had made during his first visit, he was able to line up fifteen talks on the Second Vienna School (Schönberg, Berg, Webern, and their associates) or contemporary music in modern education, which he gave at places ranging from nearby Harvard University and Boston College to Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley. He particularly enjoyed revisiting Southern California for a lecture at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and speaking at adventuresome little Black Mountain College in North Carolina ("very sympathetic"), where Josef Albers and other European avant-gardists had found shelter. He made the most of his travels, going sightseeing at the Grand Canyon and in Palm Springs, whose sunlight and elegance he relished, and strengthening his ties with Schönberg, who was unusually cordial: he even astonished Krenek by asking him to edit his theoretical writings, though nothing ever came of this proposal.

Opportunities to talk about his kind of music were easier to find than opportunities to play it. His lecture at Harvard was followed by a recital with Louis Krasner at the Harvard Club, and he participated in performances of his Second Piano Concerto in Boston in November and Chicago in January, though in neither instance was the audience response overwhelming. In March 1939 he played (on a piano) the harpsichord part in a performance of his *Concertino*, op. 27 (1924), by the Oakland Works Progress Administration (WPA) orchestra. In May he had his first real experience as a conductor (the minimal conducting of incidental music that he had done years earlier at Kassel scarcely counted) when he led a small chamber ensemble through *8-Column Line*, op. 85, which he had composed, mostly at Black Mountain College in the spring of 1939, on a commission from a ballet company in

Hartford, Connecticut. Composing and conducting this music taught him that he had no feeling for the medium, and although others were to create ballets using his music, he never returned to it.

Bored and sensing that things at the conservatory were unlikely to improve, Krenek decided to resign and take his chances elsewhere. Even before leaving in December 1938, he had taken steps to establish himself in his new surroundings as a writer. Drawing on his experience with the *Wiener Zeitung*, he had, while still in New Hampshire, begun a book on a foreigner's impressions of America. When he sent the first three chapters to the editors of Simon and Schuster, whom he had met while on the *Poppea* tour, they turned them down but expressed interest in a book on contemporary music. So encouraged, he began work on *Music Here and Now*, using ideas, and in places text, from *Über neue Musik*; he completed it in January 1939. He was fortunate in his translator, Barthold Fles, who while in Vienna had heard the lectures on which the book was based and had thought they would make a good book for Americans. He advised Krenek simply to enlarge on the thesis of the lectures that "throughout history, the only music of lasting importance, contributing tangibly to the evolution of new artistic thoughts, means of expression, and methods of construction, has been progressive."⁴ To his earlier account of the breakdown of tonality and the establishment of the twelve-tone system Krenek added shrewd observations on the economy of contemporary music based on his experience as an agent for composers and his conversations with Schnabel, Adorno, and, recently, Sessions. His suggestions for how contemporary music might obtain a wider audience were realistic, practical, and expressed with mildness and good humor. There was none of the all-too-common scolding of readers for failing to do their duty by the exalted artist. It was a good-natured book.

Nevertheless, Simon and Schuster turned it down, whereupon Fles took over as Krenek's literary agent and soon succeeded in placing the book with W. W. Norton. It was published in November 1939. Reviews were generally favorable, but sales were not. Even so, *Music Here and Now* impressed one young reader in a way that would have consequences for American music. Robert Erickson, a twenty-two-year-old clerk in a Chicago music store who dreamed of becoming a composer, had heard Krenek speak some months earlier in a lecture series organized by the sculptor László Moholy-Nagy at the Chicago School of Design. He at once bought the book, devoured it virtually in one sitting, and dashed off an exultant letter, saying that he hoped to study with Krenek someday, because "Ernst Krenek is the man who has begun to do and will do more for the new music in the U.S. than any other person. In every way you are the only person who can lead this idea."⁵ Meanwhile Erickson set to work trying to organize an all-Krenek concert in Chicago and even to issue a recording of Krenek's music. He estimated that five hundred dollars would be needed. "I have never seen \$500.00 in my life," he told Krenek, "but if we get to the point where we need it, I'll help raise the money one way or another"—engag-

ingly brave words for one in such marginal circumstances that, as he explained, he wrote in brown ink because he and his wife had only one pen between them, and as an artist his wife preferred brown ink for sketching.⁶ The recording never came to pass, but Erickson was to realize his personal dream: with a powerful boost from Krenek he would become one of the most subtle and original composers of his generation.

In the meantime, Krenek was finding out that he could do well on his own. On December 16, 1938, he met with Carl Engel (with whom he was still on good terms) and agreed to write a small book on the twelve-tone technique, which he finished, in German, on June 1, 1939. So that he might translate it and review the galley proofs of *Music Here and Now* in agreeable surroundings, in August he and Berta rented a cabin for three weeks at Bear Lake, Colorado. Krenek liked what he had seen of the area on his travels because it reminded him of the Dolomites. Bear Lake itself they found by looking at a map; it proved to be a remote resort at 9,600 feet elevation, and an ideal place for Krenek's work. Consequently they spent parts of five successive summers there, though at first Berta was made miserable by the altitude and loneliness. *Studies in Composition Based on the Twelve-tone Technique* was published by Schirmer in 1940 and remains the simplest explanation of the technique for the beginner. It is a model of terse, lucid, but withal genial exposition that shows a masterful teacher truly, even joyfully, in his element.

By the time it appeared, Krenek had entered the academic world, where he would remain for the next decade. The University of Michigan needed someone for the summer of 1939 to teach a large lecture class on modern music, which would be taken mainly by high school teachers, and a small class in composition. Both Walter Piston, who had tried unsuccessfully to obtain an appointment for Krenek at Harvard, and Joseph Brinkman, who had met Krenek in Europe while studying with Schnabel and now headed the piano faculty at Michigan, recommended him, and he was engaged early in December 1938. Although it was only temporary, the promise of this position helped Krenek muster the courage to leave the Malkin Conservatory.

Among the students in the composition class was George Perle, who, like his friend Erickson, had heard Krenek lecture in Chicago and resolved to study with him. Gifted with exceptional powers of analysis, Perle, then only twenty-three, engaged Krenek in deep discussions of the twelve-tone technique and suggested ways of varying the row that would soon form the basis for speculations and experiments in Krenek's own music.*

The university orchestra was a pleasant surprise. Krenek finished his *Symphonic Piece*, op. 86 (which fulfilled the Sacher commission), on August 1, while still in

*Perle became a composer and theorist of note. His study of Berg's *Lulu* helped to bring about its completion. His *Serial Composition and Atonality: An Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern*, first published in 1962, is rightly regarded as definitive.

residence at the university. A work entirely for strings, it was given a read-through by the students, who played it so well that Krenek was moved to write to the *New York Times* and praise their "most remarkable and convincing performance."⁷ His courses were so well received that he was asked to return for the summer of 1940. University policy, perhaps intended to forestall a presumption of permanent employment, prohibited his teaching more than two summers in a row.

Michigan was only the beginning. In the fall of 1938 Krenek had attended a gathering in Boston where he learned that Quincy Porter was leaving Vassar College for a position at the New England Conservatory of Music. He applied for Porter's old job and was asked to come to the campus for an interview.

Poughkeepsie, where Vassar is situated, was then a small manufacturing and trade center in a pleasant rural setting on the Hudson River about sixty-five miles north of New York City. Founded in 1861, the college at the time had an enrollment of twelve hundred women; it drew its students from upper-middle-class families, mostly in the East, that took education seriously—but for its humanistic, not its careerist, value. Vassar women, by undergraduate standards an earnest lot, dutifully studied the arts for their beauty and cultural importance. As George Sherman Dickinson, a musicologist who headed the music department, explained to Krenek, "Music at Vassar is taught as a subject within the field of the liberal arts, not as a professional study, and the great proportion of the students studying music here do so as cultivated amateurs. It may be said, therefore, that very little work of a highly advanced nature finds a place here."⁸ Even so, Vassar was highly regarded. Its students and well-paid faculty were proud of the school and felt a strong sense of tradition and continuity; in this they were encouraged by the president, Henry Noble McCracken, a former professor of English literature and a scholar whose views on education enjoyed national attention.

Charmed by all he saw, Krenek quickly accepted the February 8, 1939, offer of a two-year appointment as full professor with an annual salary of four thousand dollars—at the time, very good pay. He was engaged to teach three courses in theory and composition, supervise senior theses, and participate in faculty concerts. But there were limitations. "In our interview of November," Dickinson wrote when proposing the appointment, "mention was made of your offering a course in contemporary music. Since at present no expansion of the college curriculum is feasible, I suggest that the project be deferred for consideration at a later time. . . . I believe," he added, "we agreed that in undergraduate studies of theory there could appropriately be no intensified study of the 12-tone system."⁹

An astonishing agreement! All the more so when one remembers that Krenek was just then engaged in writing *Music Here and Now*, in which he argued vigorously that education, working from the inside—by which he meant emphasizing music theory—should bring about an understanding of contemporary music, and that he would soon write his superb little textbook on the twelve-tone technique, which

was certainly not beyond the grasp of undergraduates. It is not easy to think of teaching conditions less suited to his interests, his experience, his present concerns, and his place in modern music: if nothing else, they give a measure of the dislike of most contemporary music and the hostility toward twelve-tone music in particular that flourished in the United States. President McCracken liked to think that Vassar was a progressive school. One cannot but wonder how much he knew about its music department.

Krenek's parents, who knew nothing about the department at all, were very pleased that he was joining it. They were proud of his lecturing at major American universities, and his father followed his accounts of travels through the land, using an old lexicon to look up place-names. In a letter of March 21, 1939, he asked if Krenek would have an opportunity to look through "the magical new 200-inch telescope on Mount Palomar" while traveling in the West. With his future apparently secure for the time being, Krenek urged his parents to pay a visit to America and filled his letters with details about travel arrangements. But they were taken aback when they learned that to obtain an American visa they would have to guarantee that they had a minimum of one thousand dollars to cover their travel expenses. It would be better, they decided in the end, to wait until Krenek was well settled in at Vassar. Before the year was out, the Second World War had begun.

. . .

Krenek was at Bear Lake when the war broke out. The entry in his diary for September 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland, is somewhat perfunctory. He was concerned about the safety of his parents and worried lest he himself be interned, but he made no reference to the prospects for his European friends. He might have thought more about them if he had received the affectionate letter from Webern written on August 29, but it arrived many days later. Loyal Fritz Gubler, who understood the magnitude of the events, wrote a quick note on the day the war began to say that before the connection was broken, he and his wife wanted to tell Krenek how happy they were at the news of his success in America and to ask him not to forget them.

For a time after Poland's collapse it seemed that there might be little cause for concern. Mail from his parents still arrived safely—though it took about six weeks for a letter, heavily censored, to make the journey, and his father was so cautiously noncommittal that little could be gleaned beyond that his parents were alive, the weather always seemed to be bad, and they were often cold. As the winter wore on, German troops sat tight behind the Siegfried Line on Germany's western border, while Hitler and his generals debated their course. The Allies prepared for an invasion of the Low Countries, but Belgium and the Netherlands did nothing, hoping that abject neutrality would somehow save them. Americans thought the worst was probably over and that they would not be brought in.

At Vassar, the Kreneks experienced none of the animus they had feared. They had been given faculty housing and took their meals with other faculty members, all but one of them women. Krenek thought them remarkable for their vigor, cordiality, and level of conversation. To her great relief, Berta was at ease with them and happy as she had not been since they had decided not to return to Vienna. To Krenek Vassar seemed a vital and civilized place in which he would be content to spend the rest of his life. In President McCracken, whom he immediately liked and who treated him with sympathy and respect, he seemed to have found another strong, articulate man of ideas on the order of Winter. After months of wandering, uncertainty, and anxiety he had, he thought, truly found a home.

The music department had fifteen members, a large number for a college the size of Vassar, and it was therefore one of the most powerful groups on campus, even though its members, apart from Dickinson, had no standing in the world of music education. Dickinson, however, a man of formidable will and organizational energy, was well known nationally. Now in his early fifties and his twenty-third year at Vassar, he had studied theory and composition in Berlin in the early 1910s under teachers of decidedly conservative inclinations. In 1928 he returned for further study in Paris, Munich, and Vienna and as a result knew perfectly well Krenek's stature in Europe. A founder of the American Musicological Society (AMS), he had accumulated at Vassar a remarkably fine music library, one especially strong in its pre-Bach holdings. Nevertheless, his publication record was slight, for although he had helped to launch the AMS *Bulletin*, he was less a scholar than an administrator, with a passion for systems that extended to the most minute details. He had, for example, developed a syllabus for Vassar's beginning harmony course that indicated not only which topic was to be treated on a given day but also the precise number of minutes to be devoted to it. Faculty members were expected to abide by the syllabus strictly. What is more, as Krenek quickly perceived and noted in his diary, Dickinson was "stubborn."

The music theory students, Krenek found, were bright and responsive, and a few were truly gifted. He enjoyed teaching them. He emphasized creativity, and they worked away with cheerful zest, though their efforts were not supposed to lead anywhere beyond a better understanding of one of a gentlewoman's graces. Performance, in contrast, was highly regarded, and many students had received instruction on an instrument. But the college orchestra was unbalanced, lacking as it did the "unwomanly" brass and percussion instruments, and vocal ensembles, which were popular, lacked men's voices. Challenged by these limitations, Krenek composed his *Little Concerto*, op. 88, for piano, organ, and chamber (mostly string) ensemble and two a cappella works for women's chorus, but these were minor undertakings.

By way of a larger project he joined with playwright-in-residence Emmet Lavery in creating an opera called *Tarquin*. Two years younger than Krenek, Lavery was a local man who had been the city editor of a Poughkeepsie newspaper before turning

in 1934 to writing religious plays. He was presently on a temporary, part-time appointment at Vassar. Work on the opera began in January 1940, and Krenek finished the score in Los Angeles the following September. He adhered strictly to the twelve-tone technique and limited the accompaniment to one clarinet, a trumpet, a violin, percussion, and two pianos, believing that this would make travel and performance simpler. But although the work was eventually performed in Cologne in 1950, Krenek wasted his time on it, for Lavery's libretto was maudlin rubbish. In it an egomaniacal misfit compensates for his sense of inferiority by turning himself into an oppressive military dictator, Tarquin (who much resembles the dictator of Krenek's one-act opera). He falls in love with a saintly Catholic woman who spends her life helping his victims, and her example brings him to accepting God. In one of their exchanges Tarquin tells her he is a leader because he is "strong enough to lead. It is the law of life."

CORINNA: It is the law of the jungle.

TARQUIN: There are only two forces in the world: the strong and the weak, the winners and the losers.

CORINNA: No, no, even you cannot believe that. There must be a place for love and friendship, for song and music, for right thinking and fair dealing.

Eventually Tarquin is "eating his heart out" for her, and when she dies, he cries out: "I have the will to follow you through eternity and beyond. . . . Let me suffer the torments of the damned, but don't let me be alone forever. Let me find you, Corinna, and I will believe, I will believe in God all over again." It would be charitable to suppose that Krenek was not yet sufficiently acquainted with English to appreciate the awfulness of such lines. It may be that he hoped to ingratiate himself by cooperation with a local eminence. There was a bit of a stir when a "laboratory demonstration reading" of two scenes with piano accompaniment by Krenek was given at Vassar on May 13, 1941, especially as President McCracken took the minor part of an archbishop.

More profitable was the time Krenek spent happily exploring the music library. Until now he had paid little attention to music written before Bach, except that of Monteverdi. Now he began to trace through early scores the evolution of pretonal into tonal music. His enthusiasm (which made Dickinson, who regarded the library as virtually private property, very uneasy) was stimulated further by an exchange of letters with Richard S. Hill, whose article on twelve-tone music had so influenced Krenek when he was composing his Sixth String Quartet and preparing the lectures that became *Über neue Musik*. Hill had read that book and, on March 30, 1939, wrote to Krenek because he thought (mistakenly) that Krenek, misunderstanding his article, had supposed that Hill favored the most rigid obedience to the original premises of the technique. Hill explained that he believed that the original purpose

of the row—to keep all twelve tones continuously present—could be relegated to a secondary position, though diatonic effects should still be avoided. Whereas all music needed a recognizable system, greater freedom should be granted to twelve-tone composers, and he could not see why the row need always be treated as a complete entity. He would even go so far as to set aside Schönberg's principle of equality and stress certain tones over others. The row could serve as a template governing relations among the notes “but not requiring the continuous—and ultimately either ridiculous or boring—repetition of the complete row in every measure.”¹⁰

The strictness of Krenek's practice was further challenged the summer following his receipt of Hill's letter during conversations at the University of Michigan with George Perle, who suggested treating the row in ways analogous to the practices of medieval composers when they developed variations on a *cantus firmus*. Krenek protested that the theoretically feasible manipulations proposed by Perle obliterated all perceptible integrating effects of the row, especially when several versions of the row were being used simultaneously. To find examples of how one might proceed, he burrowed ever more deeply into Vassar's splendid collection of late medieval and early Renaissance music.¹¹

He had shown many times since boyhood an uncommon interest in history, and now, with the added pleasure of musical analysis, at which he excelled, he immersed himself in the modal music of Francesco Landini (1325–1397), Johannes Okeghem (1430–1495), Giovanni Palestrina (1525–1594), and Orlando di Lasso (1532–1594).^{*} He was particularly drawn to Okeghem, who was esteemed by musicologists as a theorist and teacher, though his music was neglected. He was thought to be merely intellectual, and this in itself was an attraction for Krenek, for, as he remarked in a later study of Okeghem, “the modern composer is quite sure that he himself is unjustly accused of an overdose of intellectualism, and he is anxious to find support in the historical analogy.”¹² It seemed to Krenek that in the music of the fifteenth century, and especially that of Okeghem, the contrapuntal interest was the excuse for the entire undertaking. Composers such as Okeghem were not trying to gratify the audience but to honor God with forms too complex and subtle to be perceived simply by listening. (God, of course, would have no trouble with them.)

^{*}Krenek has defined modal music as “the art-music of the Medieval and Early Renaissance [which] utilized eight different scales—or modes—made up of five whole-tone and two half-tone steps within the octave. They were accorded Greek names—Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and so forth—on the unproven assumption that they were derived from Greek scales. The differences among them were determined by the location of the whole- and half-tone steps and by the identity of the last note (*finales* or “final”) of the mode. Early modal music, for example the Gregorian chant, was monophonic, but as voices were added—producing polyphony—attention began to be paid to the degree of apparent consonance and dissonance. Conceptions of tonic and dominant notes (such as C and G in the modern C major and minor scales) gradually came into being, and from this tonality emerged in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Two Renaissance modes came to be preferred and then used exclusively and formed the bases for major and minor scales.” (From a set of definitions prepared by Krenek and Adorno in 1943 for a dictionary of music that was never published.)

Nevertheless, pleased as he was patiently to extrapolate the intricate structures of Okeghem's music, Krenek was drawn most forcibly, as he later admitted, by the emotionally expressive qualities of the music, not the composer's mastery of counterpoint—though he did derive, he said, profound satisfaction from the discovery in Okeghem's contrapuntal manipulations many of the same impulses and principles that shaped his own music. He began to feel a strong kinship with this composer.

As he pored over the early scores Krenek was looking for structural devices that might be applied to the twelve-tone row, which, as Hill had pointed out, was itself somewhat modal in character. He had long since expanded into a journal the diary he had kept while on his first trip to the United States, and now he filled its pages with speculations of great density. He was especially interested in how these composers created impressions of transition and closure; he wondered if there might be some universal principle immanent in *all* configurations that, whether they be modal, tonal, or atonal, a listener perceived as cadential in effect and that, if applied to twelve-tone music, would furnish the basis for an organizational system such as Hill said would be required if the row were to be varied in many different ways. Krenek himself was chafing under the restrictions of "classical" twelve-tone music as he worked on *Tarquin* and the choral pieces for Vassar students, finding it difficult to achieve melodic development while staying with the same row. Yet if one were to follow Hill's suggestions, what would become of coherence?

When he composed *The Holy Ghost's Ark*, op. 91a, some months later and for the first time in ten years did not use the twelve-tone technique, he had melodic freedom, but he was troubled by the lack of a system; then when he composed a related cantata, *La Corona*, op. 91 (conceived before but completed after 91a), he returned to the technique, applying it strictly and noting in his journal that he was "almost sure" this was the only way to use it. He conceded that this approach drastically limited the field of invention, though when invention coincided with the preformed system of patterns inherent in any row the achievement could be very great. "The aim," he concluded, "apparently would be to train oneself so that within these limits the utmost freedom could be realized, that is to say[,] those coincidences would take any desired form."¹³ Apparently such coincidences emerged during the composing of *La Corona*, but experience soon made him change his mind: a little over a month later he wrote that he did not want to become too theoretical, for that inhibited spontaneity, and the composer should be as spontaneous as possible. Atonality, of which twelve-tone music was a part, was supposed to bring freedom, "but now we have imposed a new kind of restriction."¹⁴

When Vassar reopened in the fall of 1941 he returned to the study of modal music, giving close attention to the devices used in the absence of tonal harmony to achieve emphasis, forward musical motion, and a perceptible structure. He became convinced that these devices could not but establish a measure of vestigial or sham

tonality even in twelve-tone music, but that it would nevertheless be a mistake to discard them because they might reveal an "all-embracing principle" (how he wanted the assurance of such a quiddity!) according to which it would be possible to regard all music as ultimately tonal. Be that as it may, the example of modal music suggested treating a twelve-tone row as if it were a mode, but Krenek concluded that with twelve notes a row was too long to be used that way and it would be better to treat it as melodic in character—except that melodies do not often come in sets of twelve, which meant that there were usually leftover notes to be dealt with. Caught between his desire for spontaneity and his desire for a system, partial to true cadences but long convinced that the tonal harmony which made them possible was exhausted, Krenek was at an impasse.

Then all at once, things came together for him in a blaze of creative excitement: the stratagem of shifting the notes of the series that he had used for the "Francis row" of *Karl V* and again in the orchestral piece he composed for Sacher; the impression made on him by Webern's symmetries; the suggestions of Hill and Perle for subdividing and otherwise varying and loosening the row; all that he had been learning about modal music—suddenly he saw a way to combine them.* For a new composition that he had just begun to sketch he made two moves described in his journal for November 16, 1941, that broke the impasse, opened up new dimensions for invention and expressiveness while still assuring a system and a perceivable structure, and fundamentally affected all of the music he would compose from this time forward. First, he subdivided the row into two complementary six-tone rows having a scalar or modelike configuration; then he altered these rows by *continuously* applying the shifting stratagem of the "Francis row." He called this "rotation," a term he would henceforth use many times when explaining the organization of his works.

He began with a twelve-tone row made up of two complementary six-tone rows (Ex. 9a), in which the successions of intervals were closely similar but not precisely the same. He then applied rotation by taking the first note of each six-tone row and moving it to the end (Ex. 9b); this produced two new six-tone rows and a new twelve-tone row so like the original rows that idiomatic consistency was maintained and structural relations could be easily established. A second rotation gave him additional idiomatic material (Ex. 9c). By continuing to rotate notes until he reached the point at which the next rotation would restore the original versions, Krenek would obtain six versions of each of the six-tone rows (and six of the twelve-tone row, but it was the six-tone rows that interested him; the twelve-tone row was simply the original matrix). If he then proceeded to develop retrogressive, inverse,

*It is significant for the character of Webern's music and the influence that he had on Krenek that he began as a student of musicology and wrote his doctoral thesis on the *Choralis Constantinus*, a monumental collection of modal chorales by Henricus Isaac (1450[?]-1517).

EXAMPLE 9

(a) A twelve-tone row consisting of two complementary six-tone rows.



(b) New rows created by rotating notes of the rows in Example 9a.



(c) Additional new rows created by further rotation of the notes of the rows in Example 9a.



and retrogressive-inverse versions of these, he would have twenty-four versions of each six-tone row, or forty-eight six-tone rows all systematically related to one another.

The forty-eight rows had been created without resort to transposition, which, it will be remembered, was one way of multiplying versions of the row in "classical" twelve-tone technique. Krenek now turned to this method, but not in the accustomed way. That is, he did not just transpose his forty-eight rows as they stood, which is what Schönberg and other twelve-tone composers regularly did and he himself had done. Instead, he applied rotation here as well. He systematically switched designated tones, but now he also transposed the successive versions so that they always began on the same note. This he called "chromatic rotation." It worked thus: starting with the original he again moved the first note of each six-tone row to the end, but at the same time he transposed the whole rows so that the new first notes were identical with the first notes of the original. Thus when the first notes of the original six-tone rows (F and B) were moved to the end, the second notes (G and C) became the new first notes. Then the whole rows were transposed so that G became F and C became B and all the other notes were shifted downward. Now the rows would be as shown in Ex. 10a. A second chromatic rotation would produce the rows of Ex. 10b.

A curious feature of this stratagem, which appeared in the first such rotation and became conspicuous in the second, is that the same notes begin to show up in both rows. Thus in the second rotation (Ex. 10b), A, B, C-sharp, and D-sharp appear in both six-tone series. This meant, first, that together they no longer formed a twelve-

EXAMPLE 10

(a) New rows created by "chromatic rotation" of the notes of the rows in Example 9a.



(b) Additional new rows created by further "chromatic rotation" of the notes of the rows in Example 9a.



tone row and, second, that certain notes would be emphasized above others with consequent suggestions of tonal centers, though not of prescribed harmonic relations. This, of course, was in violation of Schönberg's principle of equality among all twelve tones.

Nevertheless, Krenek, remembering modal emphases and points of reference in the works of the composers he had studied, would make good use of this phenomenon. Meanwhile, he had liberated the row from its classical strictness and had provided room for spontaneity, for if he applied both types of rotation to complementary six-tone rows, he would have available 96 systematically related configurations. If then the whole congeries were transposed eleven times, as had been part of classical twelve-tone practice, he would have 1,152 rows. "There would seem to be interminable combinations," he observed in his journal. And he was right, for if one were to employ all possible methods of rotating and transposing (for example, shifting the *second* note to the end and making the *second* note the same as the first note of the original, or again the same as the second note of the original, and so on), one would end up with 498,960,000 rows! Of course, relatedness among the notes and the listener's sense that a system of integration among them was present would have long since vanished. Krenek realized this at once, and though he liked to amuse himself with generating variations on a given series, he never used more than a few of the possibilities in a composition. Even so, in certain later compositions he sometimes carried rotation to the point that even the most attentive listener, hearing the music many times, would have only an intermittent and faint sense of an integrating system.

The passages in his journal that describe rotation glow with excitement and suggest that Krenek was enjoying a period of masterful confidence. Anyone aware of the pleasure he got from abstruse formulas could envision him almost chuckling as he shifted notes around and saw how many ingenious relations could be developed among them. But in fact his circumstances, recently so fortunate, had become ex-

tremely blighted: he was at this very moment in a dark valley of despair deeper than that of 1931, and he was suffering from anxieties more harrowing than the worst of the spring of 1938, when he was hurrying from one embassy to another while trying to support himself with recitals and prepare for emigration to America.

When it began, Krenek's affliction had little to do with the war, which was still in a stalemate. Vienna seemed safe, and although his father's letters hinted at discomfort in their continuous reports of poor weather, nothing suggested that his parents or friends were in any danger. Rather, his troubles began when he suddenly realized that at a women's college in rural Poughkeepsie he was almost wholly cut off from the music world in which, just a year before, he had been flourishing. It seemed as if overnight he had become an obscure nobody. Foreign artists, no matter how big their names, still had to appeal to American tastes, and these grew increasingly nationalistic, sentimental, and lowbrow as the nation hastily armed against the threat of an Axis triumph. No matter that *Music Here and Now* had received favorable notices; the invitations to speak and perform had ceased, for as a twelve-tone composer Krenek could scarcely have been more at odds with the preferences of those who put programs together. To make matters worse, he and his music had become anathema to the Eastern Establishment led by Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson, esteemed advocates of the "right" kind of contemporary music for America.

He might have coped better with this setback were he still as happy with Vassar as he had been on his arrival. But in less than four months he had begun to have misgivings about his colleagues in the music department, whose standards seemed low and ideas old-fashioned. By spring he had concluded that his efforts at teaching were not being repaid by the results. The students were charming and responsive, to be sure, but was teaching genteel dilettantes to be his life's work? Was his music destined to be performed henceforth only by and for undergraduates?

Suddenly fear was added to his gathering melancholy. On April 9, 1940, Germany invaded the Low Countries. The British evacuated Dunkirk on May 27; Paris fell on June 14; France surrendered on June 22. Deeply anxious now about his parents, Krenek was becoming terrified for himself. Three days after Dunkirk he was filled with a sense of impending doom and wondered whether it would be bombs or a concentration camp for him. But no one came to take him away, and he went off to fill a second teaching engagement at the University of Michigan, followed by a stay at Bear Lake; there fear seized him again, and he wondered if he would even be alive the following year. He needed desperately to get out of himself. He needed a strong personality on which to lean.

In this state he returned to Vassar, where he was cordially welcomed by President McCracken, who invited him to become one of eight faculty members of a group to be called "Potluck," which would meet monthly for dinner and the reading of papers. It resembled the Winter circle of happier times, and the invitation to a

comparative newcomer such as Krenek was certainly a mark of McCracken's regard. Still Krenek's mood persisted, feeding on itself, his increasing sense of alienation, and reports of the success of colleagues who had managed to please, or at least not greatly offend, American audiences. A violin concerto by Sessions, that sturdy modernist, had received its first performance in Chicago the previous January. Darius Milhaud arrived in the United States on July 15 and conducted the premiere of his *First Symphony*—also in Chicago—on October 17. Stravinsky completed his *Symphony in C* in August and conducted it—yet again in Chicago—on November 7. How galling for Krenek, who heard from Erickson at about this time that if he came to Chicago and gave a lecture-performance that Erickson was trying to arrange, he would receive, after other expenses had been disposed of, the munificent sum of thirty-six dollars, travel expenses to be paid by Krenek. The invitation to join the Potluck group could not assuage such humiliations.

But far, far worse lay just ahead. On December 2, 1940, Dickinson sent a memorandum to Krenek and the three other teachers of music theory saying that students coming into his own courses lacked adequate preparation. "It is conceivable, that . . . our advanced courses are too advanced for a well-sustained achievement on the part of even the better students. . . . It is my belief," he concluded, "that we should review our work with a view to producing a well-grounded and liberal musical culture, before attempting to concentrate upon the production of composers and musicologists, as such."¹⁵ In this conclusion he was saying no more than he had said in his letter offering Krenek an appointment, with its emphasis that at Vassar music was taught as a liberal art to "cultivated amateurs" and that "very little work of a highly advanced nature finds a place here." Krenek waited only two days before sending off a long response in which he agreed that they should not seek to train students for careers as composers but maintained that composition was a way of advancing liberal musical education. The faculty could, he said, put too much emphasis on elementary work, resulting in specialization at a low level and the "cultivating of dull, unenlightened craftsmanship." He added that they could afford to be "rather indulgent" in regard to some details, the importance of which was open to discussion. He wanted to go on record as opposed to change. Had he set out deliberately to do so, Krenek could scarcely have offered comments more likely to enrage the chairman. The consequences were quick to follow.

He was now in the second year of his appointment, which would end on June 20, 1941. He assumed that he would be reappointed. He was conscientious and thorough in fulfilling his teaching and other obligations; he was well liked by his students; in terms of international renown, if not of popularity, his was the most distinguished name to be found on the music faculty of any American college or university except for the University of California, Los Angeles, where Schönberg now taught. But because he was inclined to worry, he wanted to have the matter of his future settled; he informed Dickinson that he was going to attend the annual

meeting of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) over Christmas break and said he would like to know if his appointment was to be renewed. He got his answer in Cleveland, where he was scheduled to read a paper, "Teaching the Atonal Idiom," which was illustrated with short compositions by Vassar students. (In this context, "atonal" plainly meant "twelve-tone"; Krenek was carrying the war to the enemy, for Dickinson was a founder and presently the vice-president of the MTNA.) The senior music faculty members, much as they admired Krenek as a composer, scholar, and teacher, had voted unanimously against reappointment. They believed, Dickinson wrote in a letter dated December 28, 1940, "that the specialized aspect of contemporary music which you so enthusiastically and forcibly represent has little place in the curriculum of an undergraduate college such as Vassar." They felt that in both the classroom and the community this aspect would be emphasized to a measure "substantially out of proportion to its proper place, as we conceive it, in our scheme of education." Moreover, the twelve-tone system curtailed students' individuality, took time from "fundamental disciplines," and threatened to split the department over educational and artistic issues. To show his appreciation of Krenek's services he enclosed a "To Whom It May Concern" letter for Krenek to use in seeking another job.

Krenek immediately protested to President McCracken, who ruled that he must be granted a third year, which would end on June 30, 1942, because he had not been given enough notice—a technicality highly embarrassing to Dickinson, who was regarded at Vassar as an absolute master of academic rules and governance. But the ruling did little to raise Krenek's spirits, which sank so low that he contemplated suicide. The progress of the war had taken a turn that made bleak the prospects of his finding another position and ravaged him with anxiety.

For Japan had now to be reckoned with. After joining the Axis alliance in September 1940, it began threatening Southeast Asia and the Philippines, which were rich in the raw materials it needed to become a world power. After signing a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union, Japan's leaders concluded that the time had come to make their move. On May 27, 1941, President Roosevelt declared a state of unlimited emergency. The media, rallying to the flag, began preparing the public for war. All this brought Krenek close to hysteria as he brooded on the treatment he might expect as a citizen of an enemy country, though absolutely nothing in the behavior of anyone he encountered threatened him in this regard. But soon his fears were, in his eyes, validated.

Early in July 1941 Krenek received in the mail a copy of an article submitted to *Modern Music* by Warren D. Allen, organist and professor of music at Stanford University, in which Allen made the incredible allegation that the twelve-tone technique was a symbol and example of totalitarianism and that Hitler was delighted by the confusion being spread in the democratic world by those who taught it. Krenek

was terrified. Using English, as he would henceforth, he wrote in his journal on July 3, 1941:

If this goes through, it means the inexorable end of everything. I can just as soon hang myself, and I probably will. This means the free-for-all manhunt against me and a few other people—mainly against me, deportation, concentration camp. . . . It is a dreadful nightmare, and I can't stand it any longer. . . . This can't go on, it is too much for anybody, too much for me after all the disappointments and hardships. How did I deserve all this? Well, I may be proud of having to suffer for my artistic convictions, but there is no force left in me to live up to them. . . . I am lost. The end is near. Everything closes in on me. Mortal danger. What am I to do[?] God help me.

What he did do in the next two days was compose *The Holy Ghost's Ark*, his first work in ten years not using the twelve-tone technique. "I wonder," he noted, "if I was inspired to this by Allen's volley?" (It is not clear whether by "this" he meant using words from a sermon by John Donne or composing in a different idiom.) He wrote to Allen asking him to withdraw the article, and to the editors of *Modern Music* urging them to reject it if he did not. The editors replied at once, saying that they would not accept such a piece, and Allen wrote later to say that he had withdrawn it.* But the damage had been done, and Krenek returned to Vassar for his third and presumably final year in an extremely depressed state of mind.

He tried to avoid meeting his colleagues, Dickinson particularly. "I can't stand . . . any longer," he confided in his journal on November 30, 1941, "to scrutinize the miens of petty Province [*sic*] school teachers for signs spelling salvation or doom for me." The library was a refuge, and he obtained an interview with President McCracken, who agreed to ask the music department to review its decision. Then came December 7, and the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

During the first days after America entered the war Krenek could not bring himself to write in his journal, but nearly three weeks later he surveyed his situation. "From now on we will live in perpetual fear and tremble [*sic*], till the end comes. . . ." he wrote on December 20. "I have the feeling of having wasted my whole life, although I am not able to point out exactly what I have missed and bungled up. I only know it is too late, too late for everything." The department,

*However, he told Krenek that he would be calling attention in a forthcoming book to the "negative terms" that Krenek used in arguing for atonal music, and still later wrote to say that he hoped Krenek was now stressing "positive qualities" in his teaching. He enclosed a bulletin, *Adjustment of the College Curriculum to Wartime Conditions and Needs; Report No. 7—Music*, which had been prepared for the U.S. Office of Education by a committee that Allen chaired. It said that the nation must "formulate plans for the use of music and the choice of materials in such a way that music will make us feel *more like working* at the tasks ahead of us; also that when the war is over, our music may inspire us to *keep on working* to solve the problems which will still confront us." It concluded with what it said was an old adage: "Set the boys and girls to singing, and you will set the men to fighting." In the fall of 1942, Vassar heeded the directions of the bulletin and introduced a course on the place of music in wartime and its effect on therapy and factory production.

meantime, had once again decided against recommending his reappointment, saying that the reasons on which it had based its original decision still pertained. He nevertheless continued to struggle, asking McCracken to present the matter to his Advisory Committee and offering a point-by-point refutation of Dickinson's charges. He included a list of the musical works studied in his courses, noting that out of sixty or more, only two embodied the twelve-tone technique, and a majority were composed before 1900. McCracken did not meet with the committee but with the department members, who declined to reconsider their decision. "I regret their action deeply," he wrote on January 6, 1942, "and yet, as it is based on a theory of musical learning with which I am unfamiliar, I cannot oppose it. It is a matter of very great personal regret, and, in my opinion, less than just to yourself." He promised to take the matter up with a committee of the trustees of the college, but held out little hope.

In the interim, Sessions wrote to McCracken on January 20, 1942, praising Krenek as "a man of whom any institution with which he is connected may well be proud . . . one of the most gifted and distinguished of living composers, and a teacher who has probed deeply into the basic problems of his art," but to no avail. The trustees' committee, having listened to both Dickinson and Krenek, voted to support the department's decision. McCracken wrote on February 11, 1942, that he had the impression the committee members regretted their action but found it impossible to overrule an entire department. McCracken reiterated his regret and added, "The entire history of the situation reflects the greatest credit upon you."

But the same cannot be said for McCracken himself. Although his career generally shows him to be a man of many attributes, in this instance courage was not one of them. If he esteemed Krenek as highly as he said, he should have faced Dickinson down. Had Dickinson dared to go over his head to the trustees, they would have backed the president; otherwise they would have had to dismiss him, and this they never would have done, not a man of his stature in higher education who had brought so much distinction to Vassar. That he allowed things to reach a point where Dickinson and Krenek spoke directly to the trustees is itself scandalous, going entirely against traditional university protocol. In the test of wills, clearly, Dickinson was the stronger man and McCracken was afraid of him. The other department members were nonentities who on their own would never dare oppose the president. Obviously they understood the dynamics of power at Vassar and so sided with their chairman.

Yet why were they all so quick to turn on Krenek when the testimony and performance of the best students indicated that his teaching was at least satisfactory and probably excellent, and when the content of his courses did not bear out Dickinson's charge of overemphasis on twelve-tone music? The answer seems to be that they disliked him and the way the best students were drawn to him, soon becoming

partisans inclined to regard themselves as an elite group. That this occurred is apparent in the letters his students later wrote to him.¹⁶ His colleagues sensed this trend. In his letter Dickinson had cited "the unavoidable recruiting of disciples" that Krenek's "aggressive pursuit of . . . doctrinal specialization" had produced, and said that the split developing in the department had spread to the students. Krenek, of course, denied this charge, but the students' letters show that in this, at least, Dickinson was right.

From the time when, as an obscure student beginning his studies at the Hochschule in Berlin, he had decided he should save all his correspondence and other papers because he was going to be famous, Krenek had been preoccupied with himself and his status as a composer. He needed a strong figure close by to draw him out of himself, as Anna Mahler had in those early days. But now he had no such support. McCracken had failed him; Adorno and Sessions were far away, and the now-friendly Schönberg even farther. Whatever support his loyal and admiring father might have provided was unobtainable: the last letter from his parents reached Krenek just before Pearl Harbor, and his own last letter to them, dated December 5, 1941, was returned to him six months later stamped "Service Suspended"; it had been opened and resealed. In his loneliness and despair Krenek turned ever more inward.

Even as he seemed destined to sink into oblivion he was compelled to watch Hindemith, of whom he had been jealous for years, teaching talented young men at Yale who *did* intend to become composers, and making steady gains with American audiences that liked his choral music and symphonies, especially the one based on his opera *Mathis der Maler*. And now Krenek was being turned out by a group of nobodies. Dickinson, for all his eccentricities, was a man of parts, but the others counted for nothing in the world of music—yet they dared to find him wanting. Krenek knew well and in his journal expressed regret that he lacked the conversational graces that put people at their ease. He often impressed those about him as cold and snobbish when in fact he was suffering from shyness—he, who in writing and speaking to a large audience, where close encounters did not threaten, could be so witty and charming. At times, to be sure, he *was* snobbish, intensely so, and he lacked the skill and often the desire to hide his feelings. Of a student-faculty performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Princess Ida*, the kind of harmless nonsense that draws an academic community together and relieves tension in times of stress, he could write in his journal on April 27, 1940: "A shameful manifestation of stupidity, arrogance, naïveté, and want of respect. . . . That they find amusement in such dreary exhibitionism seems to me deeply suspicious and depressing." In a small institution like Vassar it would have been impossible for his associates not to sense his low regard for them; students, too, would have picked up on the friction and quickly taken sides. All told, it would not have been easy for any European composer

of Krenek's persuasion to adapt to Vassar. (Think of Schönberg! Think of Webern! Though Berg might have fit in more readily than most.) And while he conducted himself with great patience and dignity in his exchanges with Dickinson and McCracken, Krenek lacked the temperament to help his cause in ordinary daily relations. There was too much Max and not enough Jonny. But out of all his indignities and misery there emerged a masterwork that may be the highest artistic achievement of his life.



Krenek's birthplace, Argauergasse 3, Vienna (with Krenek's father looking out of the second-story window). Photo courtesy of Ernst Krenek.



Krenck's father, ca. 1914. Photo courtesy of Ernst Krenck.



Krenek and his mother, ca. 1914. Photo courtesy of Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



Ernst Krenek at six (*left*) with his cousin Friedrich ("Fritz") Raab. Photo courtesy of Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



Ernst Krenk in 1923. Photo by Suse Byk (Berlin), courtesy of Ernst Krenk.



Krenek, ca. 1925: a sketch by Oskar Kokoschka. Photo courtesy of Ernst Krenek.



Max boarding the train, from the Leipzig world premiere of *Jonny spielt auf*. Photo courtesy of Universal Edition, A.G.



Anton Webern. Photo courtesy of Universal Edition, A.G.



Karl Kraus. Photo courtesy of Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



From the 1965 production of *Karl V* in Munich. Photo courtesy of Universal Edition, A.G.



Ernst and Berta Krenck at Vassar College, ca. 1940. Photo courtesy of Ernst Krenck.



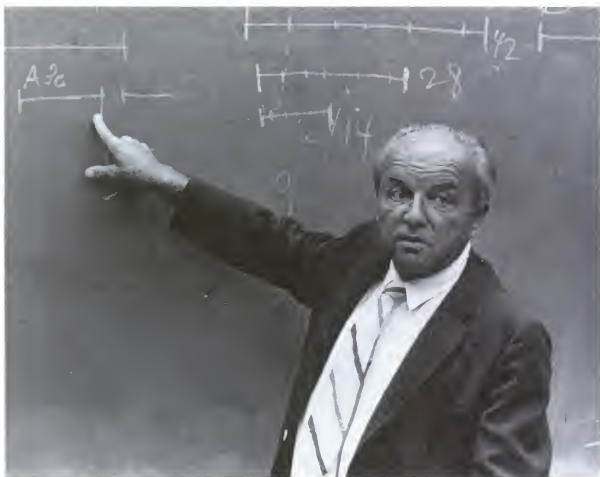
Ernst Krenek with Herbert Eimert (*right*) at Eimert's electronic studio in Cologne, 1955.
Photo courtesy of Ernst Krenek.



Ernst and Gladys Krenck at Darmstadt, 1956. Photo courtesy of Ernst Krenck.



Head of Ernst Krenek modeled in plaster by Anna Mahler (a bronze casting of which is in Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien). Photo courtesy of Ernst Krenek.



Krenek explaining the structure of his *From Three Make Seven*, op. 177. Photo by Harry W. Crosby.



Ernst Krenek, Gladys Krenek, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and Lothar Zagrosek (*rear*) at a rehearsal of *The Dissembler*, 1980. Photo courtesy of Diether Warneck.

10 · NEW BEGINNINGS: 1942 – 1949

On November 2, 1941, Krenk noted in his journal that he was drawn toward composing a choral work using the Lamentations of Jeremiah for its text. He had considered but soon rejected the idea of writing a play or composing an oratorio about Saint Thomas Aquinas. He thought longer about doing an opera, but in the end the Lamentations appealed to him more, and on November 11 he set to work despite the distractions assailing him.

The Lamentations consist of five great dirges, or *threnoi*, on the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon's Temple. They were first ascribed to Jeremiah in the Greek Septuagint of the second century; modern scholarship holds that the *threnoi* are separate units from different periods, the last having perhaps been composed in the time of Nehemiah, who lived a century and a half after Jeremiah. Krenk chose from the voluminous text the excerpts used by the Catholic church for the Tenebrae services (matins and lauds of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). Although he was not intending to compose a liturgical work for use in these services, "I did so," he explained later, "because this selection was sanctified by the authority of the institution that made it, an institution into which I was born and to which I developed an intense allegiance ever since Nazi-dominated Germany began to threaten with extinction my native country, Austria."¹ His text, which was in Latin, consisted of chapter 1, verses 1–44; chapter 2, verses 8–15; chapter 3, verses 1–9 and 22–30; chapter 4, verses 1–6; and chapter 5, verses 1–11. The excerpts were arranged in the form of nine lessons divided into groups of three for each of the holy days. Each lesson ended with the invocation of Jerusalem and a prayer for its salvation and return to God.

At the time, the third lesson for Good Friday must have had special poignance for Krenk, for it reads: "I am the man that hath seen affliction / by the rod of his

wrath. / He led me and brought me into darkness, but not into light.” But Kreněk did not link himself with wayward Jerusalem, for he in no way regarded himself as a transgressor. Any parallels would have been with Austria, which had welcomed Hitler. What counted for Kreněk were the feelings, established in the opening lines:

How doth the city sit solitary,
that was full of people!
how she is become as a widow!
she that was great among the nations,
and princess among the provinces,
how she is become tributary!
She weepeth sore in the night,
and her tears are on her cheeks:
among all her lovers
she hath none to comfort her:
all her friends have dealt treacherously with her,
they are become her enemies.

Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction,
and because of great servitude:
she dwelleth among the heathen,
she findeth no rest;
all her persecutors overtook her
between the straits. . . .

Her adversaries are chief,
her enemies prosper;
for the Lord hath afflicted her
for the multitude of her transgressions;
her children are gone into captivity
before the enemy.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord thy God.

Even though he might share the feelings of betrayal and abandonment, Kreněk had chosen a text that lifted him out of his self-absorption to a vision of the suffering of a whole people, a tragic vision. Yet he was not, as he had been in *Karl V*, his last work of comparable magnitude, addressing others. He was composing entirely for his own satisfaction without thought of performance, and as he organized his dauntingly complex materials into a work that, if ever performed, would last over an hour, he made no concessions at all to what would ordinarily be regarded as the extreme limits of a chorus's ability to cope with contrapuntal, atonal a cappella music. His electing to go beyond these limits was of great importance, for it would have a lasting effect on his attitude toward his music, his putative audience, and his conception of the role of the composer, and it helped in fundamental ways to determine the character of his subsequent works.

Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae, op. 43, completed on May 7, 1942, is written for

an unaccompanied mixed chorus with the parts distributed so that the number of voices at a given time ranges from one to nine. When the number of voices is eight, they are usually grouped into two double choruses in antiphonal relation to each other. The basic twelve-tone row is divided into two six-tone rows, which are rotated as described earlier.* They suggest Gregorian modes but are not truly modal because the order of the tones is fixed, as it is not in real modes. However, the resemblance enabled Krenek to adapt ideas for cadential effects and chords from the works of medieval composers, and on March 2, as he was approaching the end, he noted in his journal the similarity between this work and Okeghem's music. Moreover, the six-tone rows have a strongly motivic effect, being near in size to the four-tone motifs of Gregorian chants, so that reiteration of the rows and rhythmic patterns in the medieval manner gives the music continuity, direction, and points of emphasis. There is here no *cantus firmus*, no given melody, although in the introduction the alto voices quote the Gregorian incipit in a way that strongly suggests a *cantus*.

In keeping with their degree of consonance or dissonance, the chords create tonal anticipation, tonal centers, and hints of real harmonic progressions, all of which imply *directed* tensions, cadences, transitions, and closures. Krenek was well aware of the "harmonic flavors," as he called them, that he was introducing. In fact, he regarded these as the main advantage of using rotation with complementary six-tone units, for in them he had more varied expressive resources with which to color and emphasize the text while avoiding the clichés of tonal church music. "The *Lamentatio*," he later observed, "stands at a crossroads, as it were, in that in its intransigency it continues and perhaps exceeds the uncompromising attitude of earlier [twelve-tone] works . . . , while in its compositional method it somewhat relaxes the constructional strictness of those works."² The result is music characterized by logic, continuous evolution, and clear referential nodes such as Hill had called for, and by drama, melodylike lyricism, contrapuntal intensity, and vertical density befitting its text. Yet even where it is most concentrated and complex, it has a crystalline clarity unimpaired by the density. Somber without being monotonous, it is by turns pensive and majestic, and at its close reaches supernal heights. "It soars," Erickson later wrote, "in that absolutely authentic way that has been absent in church music since the fifteenth century."³

Krenek had supposed that the *Lamentatio* would never be sung and anticipated a different reward. "The fact that something is written for no practical purpose whatsoever," he noted in his journal on December 2, 1941, "seems to favor the quality of the writing, because the excellence of the job is the only justification for its being done and the only source of satisfaction for the maker. I wonder if I am not much more fussy about certain details in the Lamentations because I know that no living

*The six-tone rows shown in Exs. 9 and 10 above were taken from this work.

person will sing or hear them, than I would be in a composition ready for consumption." Perhaps. Perhaps, too, there can be no better measure of the strange mixture of anxiety, despair, and creative exhilaration in his mind at this moment. One can be glad that he put no restraint on his powers, for in time the work was performed and its incomparable beauty and evocative power could be heard.

The first opportunity came as early as the spring of 1943, when a women's choir led by Robert Holliday performed a short section in St. Paul, Minnesota. Several years later Holliday recorded a larger portion with mixed chorus. Other performances of portions followed, and finally, on October 15, 1958, the entire work was presented by the NCRV Ensemble of Hilversum (the Netherlands) under the direction of Marinus Voorberg, as part of the first service in the rebuilt St. Martin's Church in Kassel, which had been destroyed during the Second World War. Since then there have been other performances of the whole work in Vienna and Graz, partial performances at the Tanglewood Festival and in New York City, and a full-length recording by Voorberg's choir.

What the performances show, be they of parts or of the whole, is that the work cries out for a liturgical setting and that because of its length and organization, audiences might best respond to it if it were presented over three days with ritualistic pauses at the appropriate points. Its subtlety and complexity demand the most acute attention, which inexperienced listeners might have difficulty maintaining for over an hour because the canonical format and the close resemblances among the six-tone patterns may create an effect of stasis. Yet for those who can follow its tightly meshed strands, the *Lamentatio* is an enthralling work that leaves one in that state of serene repletion felt at the close of Bach's *Matthäus-Passion*.

. . .

As the year wore on and Krenk worked on the *Lamentatio*, he faced the fact that he would have to find another teaching appointment. He had no income and he received no royalties from Europe and virtually none from America, and only Dimitri Mitropoulos of the Minneapolis Symphony showed any interest in his work. In desperation he wrote to Indiana University, the Peabody Conservatory, Wells College, and the Connecticut College for Women, which were rumored to have openings, but, confronted with a wartime economy and the prospect of reduced enrollments, they were not filling them. He even thought of studying for a doctorate at Princeton, hoping that he might receive some kind of fellowship, but his inquiries only embarrassed the music faculty, none of whom had doctor's degrees.

His most loyal supporter, young Robert Erickson, would try anything to help but could do little, being himself in severe difficulties. He had studied with Krenk at the University of Michigan during the summer of 1940 and thereafter had written to him regularly, often seeking comments on his compositions, among which was a piano sonata dedicated to Krenk. "Never have I met," he wrote, "a person

whose feelings and unselfish counsel have helped me more, or made [me] more grateful than yours." But Erickson had lost his job at the music store in Chicago and had moved to the little town of Douglas, Michigan, where he and his wife hoped to support themselves by making pottery. Undismayed, he continued to pour out music—a sonata for cello and piano, a string quartet, a violin sonata; even a ten-hour-a-day job in a metal-plating mill, which he was obliged to take when pottery did not sell, did not stop him. Though the job paid only forty-five cents an hour, he immediately wrote when he heard of Krenek's troubles, inviting him and Berta to live with them. "You are welcome to stay with us as long as you wish. . . . Just remember if things become too difficult then come out here where you will be among friends."⁴

Such a generous gesture was certainly touching; Erickson felt it was the least he could offer to show his appreciation of Krenek's care in going over his scores and offering helpful suggestions. But it was not put to the test, for suddenly Krenek was offered and accepted an appointment at a most improbable place. He had heard of an opening at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and was in correspondence regarding it with an acquaintance in the music department when he received a letter from the president of Hamline University, located across the Mississippi River in St. Paul, inviting him to become a professor of music, chairman of the department, and dean of the School of Fine Arts. Hamline had just lost its composition teacher, and someone (perhaps Mitropoulos, though Krenek never learned who) suggested him as a replacement. His informant at the University of Minnesota told him that the prospects there had dimmed and advised him to accept the Hamline offer, which he did in May. His duties would begin in the fall of 1942.

Founded in 1854 and loosely affiliated with the Methodist church, Hamline, though it called itself a university, was essentially an undergraduate college with about one thousand students. Its campus was old and shabby, for Hamline had struggled to survive the Depression and now faced the war years with nothing to spare. Its faculty of seventy-two was only one-third that of Vassar's, although the enrollments were about the same. Its library had only one-fifth as many books, and its music collection was minuscule. The music department had six members—a rather large portion of the faculty total, because quite a few Hamline students were earning certificates to teach music in public schools—but it was ill housed in a men's dormitory, the basement of which was occupied by the basketball coach and his family. He, at least, had the satisfaction of working with a well-equipped gymnasium, for his teams were outstanding, and their winning ways kept the alumni loyal and the students coming to Hamline.

St. Paul was a city of 280,000 on the east side of the river. Although it was the state capital, it was looked down on by its slightly larger "twin city," Minneapolis, on the west side. It was considered little more than a blue-collar suburb, whereas Minneapolis enjoyed the cultural benefits of a major university and the fine arts

epitomized by its orchestra. Soon after his arrival at Hamline Krenek was made aware of the social distinction, and he never found his way into Minneapolis society, as he sometimes thought he might. But the presence of Mitropoulos, who had succeeded Eugene Ormandy as orchestra director in 1937 and had written Krenek an enthusiastic letter of welcome a few days after Krenek accepted the Hamline appointment, was to be an incomparable asset.

His new position had one great benefit: he had complete freedom with regard to the curriculum. His deanship entailed virtually no administrative duties, but, coupled with the chairmanship, it gave him the authority to emphasize music history and to add graduate programs in musicology and composition, both of which he taught himself, along with harmony, counterpoint, and the piano, in a tiny classroom permeated by odors from the coach's kitchen below. Because he controlled the budget for music, he was able to set aside enough to begin building up the music library, not by acquiring costly scores such as Dickinson had done for Vassar, but by buying microfilms from the Library of Congress.

All this, however, was yet to come. In the meantime, he spent the first part of the summer of 1942 teaching at the University of Wisconsin, where his students were composer-to-be Wilbur Ogdon and Virginia Seay, a young woman from Los Angeles who had studied with him at Vassar. When the session ended, he retired, still deep in depression, to Bear Lake. He was fearful of being drafted and felt that he was hated as an artist and foreigner by the man in the street, though nothing in the lengthy and mournful journal entries of this time indicates just why he thought so. A measure of his isolation and the neglect he now endured is given by an ISCM festival held at this time in Berkeley, California, at which were performed works by Bartók, Hindemith, Schönberg, and Rathaus, who was now established as a professor of composition at Queen's College in New York City. But there was nothing by Krenek. Only Sessions and Mitropoulos seemed to remember or care anything about him.

He arrived in St. Paul on September 1, settled with Berta into an apartment at 1299 Grand Avenue, which was to be their home for the next four and a half years, and, in spite of his mood, set to work with an aggressive energy that resounds throughout his inaugural lecture. Entitled "On the Enjoyment of Music" and delivered on October 5 in Bridgman Hall at Hamline after an introduction by Mitropoulos, this talk challenged a conservative audience little acquainted with contemporary music to learn to enjoy it by listening to the *musical process*, because music does not refer to anything but itself. Krenek pointed out that while people want new movies, plays, and books, they do not want new music. What was needed to overcome this antipathy was a second hearing of new works. "The second time you are already prepared to expect such and such things to happen in certain places, and your attention turns automatically to what goes on between the expected landmarks. You discover the connecting lines, you begin to realize that things happen according to

plan and with necessity; in other words, you experience the logic of the process, and that is where your enjoyment begins.”⁵ There could be no better account of how to listen to and enjoy his own music, especially works such as the Sixth String Quartet and the *Lamentatio*.

Less than a month later he set forth his premises for music education in a paper called “A Composer Teaching”—in essence, his retort to Dickinson and his Vassar colleagues—which he read at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association in Minneapolis. “Music without the creative approach embodied in the so-called theory courses is a dull trade,” he told the teachers, “for the creative approach—the firsthand experience in trying to do what a composer does—can alone afford us real understanding of the creative process, and no matter what particular way we ultimately want to be active in music, we will not get anywhere without that understanding.”⁶ Ten days later he explained to members of the Hamline Faculty Club in a talk entitled “Inspiration in Music” why the logical procedures in composing were so important.

The creative process is essentially one of selection and elimination, no matter to what extent its different phases are conscious and protracted labor, or quick, seemingly inspired decisions. . . . Of course, imagination is still at work, maybe more than ever, and much needed. But imagination means resourcefulness in devising action and deciding how to act, which is quite different from the assumption of the inspiration theory, which wants the composer sitting still and listening to the mysterious voice. There is countless evidence that precisely those details which startle the layman as particularly vivid, charming and emotional, as typically spontaneous elimination [i.e., giving forth] of the genius, are actually the results of painstaking labor, protracted experimentation, of correcting and rewriting all over again.⁷

Audiences listened closely to these remarks, for two days after Krenek’s talk to the Faculty Club the Minneapolis Symphony was to premiere a new orchestral work by him based on the supposed folk song “I Wonder as I Wander.” (Krenek had been led to believe it came from the mountains of North Carolina. It was actually composed by John Jacob Niles, a folk song specialist whose compositions were often mistaken for the real thing.) What those attending his lectures heard amounted to a straightforward statement of Krenek’s position: as a contemporary composer he did not expect to be accepted at once by the general public, but he did hope people would gain an appreciation of his and other modern music through intelligent attention to structure; as a teacher he believed that all persons seriously involved with music must understand it from the inside out, must understand its organization and the principles on which this organization is based; as an administrator he would promote a curriculum that emphasized composition as the best means of grasping these principles, regardless of one’s professional goals. He was calling for a rigorously intellectual approach to music. And at shabby little Hamline he had the means to achieve an impact such as he never had at Vassar.

To begin with, his advanced students, especially those in the graduate courses he established, were not studying to acquire a cultural luster; they were there to train for professional careers. Among those aspiring to become composers were some with enough ability and commitment to succeed. The greatly gifted Erickson, who enrolled in the fall of 1942 after Krenek obtained a scholarship for him, received a bachelor's degree the following June; after a stint in the army as a clerk-typist, which left him time to compose, he returned to Hamline for graduate work and eventually earned a master's degree from the University of Michigan in 1947. In time he would achieve distinction as a composer, teacher, and author of *The Structure of Music* (1955), a particularly succinct and lucid description of musical forms and materials, and *Sound Structures in Music* (1975), an outstanding study of timbres and textures based on his own experiments and compositional methods. Virginia Seay graduated from Vassar in 1943 and soon turned up at Hamline, where she collaborated with Krenek on an English translation of *Karl V*, wrote piano music that Krenek admired enough to perform in a concert at Black Mountain College, and conceived a motif that Krenek used in his *Hurricane Variations for Piano*, op. 100 (1944). Wilbur Ogdon, having completed a tour of duty in the Navy, enrolled at Hamline because Krenek was there, and later, after studies in Paris under Honegger and René Leibowitz, earned a doctorate at Indiana University in 1955 with a thesis that included the first important analytical study of Krenek's music; he, too, would become a highly regarded composer. Others who in time would make their mark in American music included composers Glenn Glasow and Gladys Nordenstrom and the conductor Thomas Nee.*

Erickson, Seay, and Ogdon had followed Krenek to Hamline because they already knew what others quickly realized: Krenek was a superlatively able and effective teacher, with a classroom style quite different from what might be expected from a composer so attracted by abstract systems and who in his public utterances emphasized formal procedures and played down inspiration. He began with two great assets: his whimsical humor (he might be ironic, but he was never hurtful) and his sensational skill at sight-reading. He did not direct students but sought instead to discover what they were trying to do and to encourage them. "He would look over what I had done, play it over at the piano, and comment. He spoke mostly about what he liked, and he talked to me more like a colleague than a student," Erickson later recalled. "He never talked down, delivered edicts or fixed instructions, and he never assigned tasks. What he offered was interest, a remarkable ear, a sensitivity to

*Krenek's students formed close bonds and after leaving Hamline kept in touch with one another and with him. In 1965, when the music department of the University of California, San Diego, was being formed, Krenek suggested that either Erickson or Ogdon be appointed the first chairman. Ogdon was appointed and immediately recruited Erickson. Together they recruited Nee. Before long composers Pauline Oliveros, Roger Reynolds, and Kenneth Gaburo joined the department, followed later by Bernard Rands, Joji Yuasa, Rand Steiger, and Brian Ferneyhough. None of the last-named ever studied with Krenek, but their appointments were in part a consequence of Krenek's early influence and his insistence on composition as the core of a music curriculum.

my musical goals . . . , a quick understanding of different musical styles and idioms, and a brilliantly analytical mind."⁸

Krenek was simply putting into practice what he had told the MTNA convention in Cleveland in 1940, at the very time that Dickinson was accusing him of inhibiting the personal development of his students: "Vouchsafing [by which he meant drawing out] personality, instead of suppressing it, appears to me as one of the vital requirements and the very touchstone of any pedagogical method."⁹ Thus he preferred to speak of what was right in a student's composition rather than of what was wrong, and always in terms of practical solutions rather than broad theoretical directives. To illustrate his meaning he might get out a Mahler score and point to how that composer had dealt with a compositional problem. In his opera course, which all the students took (for they were shrewd enough to sign up for anything and everything he taught), he would quickly summarize the libretto then turn to the piano, where he played, sang, and whistled the music while the students, who sang the choruses, looked over his shoulder. Erickson remembers that they worked their way through Monteverdi, Handel, Rameau, Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, and Wagner. "He always evoked the essence of the music, too, and he had an uncanny ability to suggest orchestral instruments and orchestral textures." Once, while imitating a timpani roll from somewhere in Wagner's Ring cycle, Krenek struck the aged and out-of-tune piano so hard that a string broke with a sound like a pistol shot. "Krenek not only did not stop," Erickson recalls, "he continued his fortissimo roll by deftly moving to some other undamaged strings."¹⁰

In this way Krenek ignited in his students an enthusiasm like his own for the music of composers preceding Bach. He used it repeatedly for examples in his course on counterpoint, and as he built the Hamline library collection he shared each new acquisition with his classes.

Days when a new microfilm arrived were especially exciting. The shades would be drawn, the projector turned on, and Krenek would sit and sightread a five or six voice mass by Josquin, old-fashioned clefs and all, sometimes singing or whistling a voice that could not be accommodated on the piano. . . . We heard and studied everything of Okeghem, Obrecht, Josquin des Prés, and their contemporaries that was available on microfilm.¹¹

Traces of such music can be heard to this day in Ogdon's compositions, and though Erickson moved on to genres incompatible with this music, what he learned in these extraordinary sessions formed the basis of his excellent descriptions of medieval and Renaissance music in *The Structure of Music*.

Krenek himself published two studies of early music, a fiercely academic essay entitled "A Discussion of the Treatment of Dissonance in Okeghem's Masses as Compared with the Contrapuntal Theory of Johannes Tinctoris," and *Johannes Okeghem*, a book for the general reader. The first appeared in 1947 in the second

volume of *Hamline Studies in Musicology*, a series founded by Krenek. It is written in an uncompromisingly professorial style that presumes a close familiarity with technical terms and the period it treats, and is an awesome vaunting of Krenek's analytical powers. One cannot avoid thinking that he was showing Dickinson, who would surely see it, what a mere composer—and a contemporary one at that—could do at Dickinson's own game. The book is wholly different in tone and is written with unusual simplicity and grace. It vividly illustrates, as had *Über neue Musik* and *Music Here and Now*, some of the qualities that made Krenek so effective in the classroom, including an unexpected ability (unexpected, that is, in one who could write as he had against the Vassar performance of *Princess Ida*) to place himself in the position of an untutored listener and address such a person's interests and attitudes. Some of Krenek's best writing is in this modest gem, which was the first in a series (unfortunately aborted) that was intended, as John Becker, the general editor, explained in his preface, to rescue from oblivion treasures of the past more compatible with Christian ideas of art than the sentimental church music of the present. These studies and the recollections of his students suggest that, had he so chosen, Krenek could have achieved great credit as a musicologist.

Of all the assets and encouragements that Hamline so unexpectedly provided, the greatest was the presence close by of what had been so conspicuously absent from rural Poughkeepsie and amateurish Vassar: technically accomplished and sympathetic performers, among whom the most significant was Dimitri Mitropoulos, whom Krenek met for the first time when he came to St. Paul.

Four years older than Krenek, Mitropoulos was a brilliant pianist and an impassioned but erratic conductor. He himself had composed during the twenties and had an intellectual interest in the twelve-tone technique. But despite his curiosity about this "scientific music," as he often referred to it, it was not music close to his heart; what he really liked was the music of Rachmaninoff. Still, while he might not care for the work of some of his contemporaries, he genuinely admired their integrity and self-sacrifice and thought it a sacred responsibility to present as much of their music as he could impose on his conservative audiences, who forgave him much because they so liked his romantic treatment of their favorites.¹²

Erickson remembers Krenek and Mitropoulos as natural allies. "Mitropoulos's approval and enthusiasm for new music made it much less easy to dismiss it out of hand, and Krenek's ideas, arguments, and historical perspective helped Mitropoulos convince his surly and intractable board of directors to allow him to program music beyond the fifty authentic warhorses."¹³ Together they founded a Twin Cities chapter of the ISCM, and Mitropoulos so involved himself in its programs that he would pay members of the Minneapolis Symphony from his own pocket to participate and, when not performing himself, would turn pages for others. The orchestra's board held this behavior against him; many programs were presented at Hamline, and the board felt that Mitropoulos demeaned himself by taking such a humble role

before a St. Paul audience. But as he told Krenek, he would do anything for modern music, "even carry chairs."¹⁴ Together they offered the Twin Cities works by Schönberg, Berg, Webern, Stravinsky, Satie, Milhaud, Hindemith, Sessions, Schnabel, and, of course, Krenek. An indication of what Mitropoulos was up against was the refusal of the orchestra board to authorize payment of royalties to Krenek for a performance of his Second Symphony in the spring of 1944 (which Krenek told Adorno was "a very strange and exciting experience" surpassing even the memorable first performance, which Adorno had heard).¹⁵ Mitropoulos made such a commotion that the president finally offered to pay up himself, at which the board gave in and sent Krenek twenty-five dollars.

In any case, Mitropoulos, whose admiration and affection for Krenek had become profound, persisted in scheduling Krenek as often as he dared, which was more than any other conductor of note would risk on behalf of twelve-tone music in general, let alone the music of one composer. He was particularly pleased with Krenek's Piano Concerto no. 3, op. 107 (1946), and as he prepared to perform it in Minneapolis and Philadelphia with himself at the keyboard, he wrote saying that he hoped he would prove himself worthy and do Krenek justice, "which as you know is one of my principal goals in my artistic life." In 1947, after studying the newly completed score of Krenek's Symphony no. 4, op. 113, which he had commissioned, he wrote in his so personal and charming idiom: "I bless a thousand times the moment I met you. I consider that to devote my love and admiration to you is really my life goal. I will die satisfied if I achieve to persuade our contemporary listeners about your indiscussable musical genius."¹⁶ And after he had conducted the premiere in New York on November 27, 1947 (paying Krenek's airfare himself so that his friend might be present), he thanked Krenek for giving him in this symphony one of the two greatest satisfactions of his life—the other being his introduction by Krenek to Mahler's Sixth Symphony. When in 1949 Mitropoulos was appointed permanent conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, he opened his first season with a performance of Krenek's Third Piano Concerto. He continued, against the pleas of conductors such as George Szell, then at Cleveland, to schedule Krenek's works when he appeared elsewhere as a guest conductor. In all the world of music, Krenek would never have a more devoted friend—though certainly Erickson, so ready to share the little he had when Krenek was in trouble, came close to rivaling him.

Mitropoulos and Krenek were fortunate in being able to draw on other fine performers for their ISCM programs. Louis Krasner, who had commissioned Berg's Violin Concerto and given the premiere performances of this work and Schönberg's Violin Concerto, was appointed concertmaster of the Minneapolis Symphony in 1944. The following year he and Krenek played a sonata for violin and piano written by Schnabel in 1935; when Krenek wrote to praise the work, Schnabel replied gratefully, remarking that most of those who even knew that he composed regarded this activity as "an unfortunate hobby, a caprice, a waste, and an embarrassment," so

that Krenek's encouragement was of great value for him.¹⁷ Another important figure was Robert Holliday, a member of the Hamline faculty and a brilliant choral conductor, who was the first to attempt even a portion of the *Lamentatio*. His student singers were sufficiently accomplished to be included in the ISCM programs. Not since his days at the Hochschule, not even during the period of his association with Webern and David Bach, had Krenek enjoyed so many immediately available opportunities for the performance of his music. And in Mitropoulos he had found the strong and determined figure his temperament required.

Thus, in what he would have supposed beforehand to be the most unlikely of places, he entered a period of creativity unparalleled since the early twenties, when he had managed to compose two symphonies, an opera, and miscellaneous other works in a single year. In answer to Ross Lee Finney's question "What do you think is the composer's wartime function?" he wrote: "Compose music."¹⁸ And he did. As the American Eighth Air Force was making its first attacks on Germany, he worked on his Third Piano Sonata, op. 92, no. 4. As the Allies invaded Sicily and Mussolini fell, he composed his *Cantata for Wartime*, op. 95, using texts from Melville's *Battle Pieces and Aspects of War* (1866) and *Mardi* (1849). Performed on March 24, 1944, by the Minneapolis Symphony and the Hamline Women's Chorus, it made a stunning impression that is remembered to this day. On D-Day he was composing his *Ballad of the Railroads*, op. 98. And when the American First Army reached Aachen, he was sketching a sonata for violin and piano to be performed by Rudolf Kolisch and himself. None of these works fitted what the Office of Education had called for in music for wartime.

The Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 99, was finished a few days before Krenek became an American citizen on January 24, 1945, and though intended for Kolisch was first performed by Krasner and Krenek at an ISCM recital in Minneapolis the following October. (Krenek also sent it to Josef Szigeti, who liked the work but had no partner capable of performing the piano part. Eventually Kolisch did perform it with Krenek.) A work not for violin with piano accompaniment but for two equal and contending voices, a style that requires a particularly assertive pianist, the sonata is a very private work—not in the sense of being composed without expectation of performance, as the *Lamentatio* was, but rather in being uninviting, solitary (for all that it requires two players). Being music that requires dispassionate analysis and the strictest attention to the "logic of the process," such as Krenek had described in his inaugural lecture, it keeps the listener at a distance. What follows, even on a second hearing, is not the enjoyment that Krenek said would come from greater acquaintance but, at best, respect, or perhaps awe. Despite some lyrical moments in its second movement, the work is too sharp-edged and steely to give pleasure except to a specialist admiring its technical features—a pleasure akin to that felt by mathematicians inspecting a particularly abstruse equation. It is a formidable rather than an engaging work.

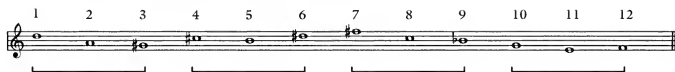
By contrast, *Santa Fe Timetable*, op. 102, is thoroughly engaging, even though it is no less studied and intricate in its structure. An a cappella work for six parts composed for Holliday's singers, it was begun in February 1945 and finished in less than six weeks, on April 4, 1945. It is a buoyant, witty, charming work in the long-absent spirit of *Potpourri*. In a letter to Adorno, Krenek said that he had been inspired by the *Liber Generationis Jesu Christi* of Josquin des Prés, which employed for its text the first chapter of the Gospel of Saint Matthew in which are listed the forebears of Christ—only Krenek, who since childhood had been fascinated by the very name of the Santa Fe Railroad, took for his text the names of the stops and stations on the line between Albuquerque and Los Angeles. Very canonical, it has in some passages a suggestion of liturgy, offset, of course, by the words; all in all it is, as Krenek told Adorno, “a highly surrealistic project.”¹⁹ He amused himself with musical puns on the place-name “Gallup,” repeated three times, and similarly sprightly rhythms for “Hackberry, Yucca, Victorville” and “Topoch, Topoch, Topoch,” which suggested to him the clicking of wheels on the rails. Though he used the twelve-tone system, this work proved immeasurably easier to sing than the *Lamentatio*, which it somewhat resembles, for Krenek used a row with intervals easy for the singers to anticipate, and many of the vertical combinations of tones were identical with familiar chords, such as a major triad with an added sixth or a major ninth chord, which the singers could “hear ahead” and use as reference points, even though no tonal center could be identified. A hit with audiences, this work brings together Krenek's rigorous intellectualism and his mischievous *joie d'esprit*; one is left with the idea that many of the classroom sessions around the piano at Hamline must have featured the same appealing combination.

The Piano Concerto no. 3, op. 107, which Krenek wrote in two weeks in February 1946 and dedicated to Mitropoulos, is a reckless, passionate, turbulent work well suited to the temperament of the conductor-pianist, who first performed it in Minneapolis on November 22 of that year and chose it for the first concert of his tenure with the New York Philharmonic. The slow second movement has grave beauty and emotional power; the third displays the same wit that helped make *Santa Fe Timetable* so appealing; and the end is a blaze of Lisztian pyrotechnics. The most tempestuous of Krenek's works since the Second Symphony, the concerto is a showstopper of the kind that brings audiences to their feet. Only afterward might the discerning listener think that it is at best an exciting minor work that comes across as a major one.

But the discerning listener should have no doubt about Krenek's String Quartet no. 7, op. 96, which he began on December 20, 1943, and finished the following February 7. It sounds like a major work, and is one—as he well knew, for he regarded it as his most important work of this period. (Later, after portions of the *Lamentatio* had been performed, he called it simply “one of my most significant compositions” of this time.)²⁰ A true masterpiece, it is the culmination of Krenek's

EXAMPLE II

The row of Krenek's Seventh String Quartet.



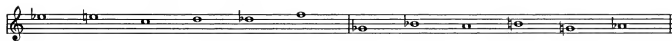
loosening of the twelve-tone row. "The manipulation of the tone-row," he later observed,

had reached a point at which little of the original tenets of the twelve-tone technique was retained. Nevertheless, the design of the whole was definitely based on the series, and the spirit of the technique governed every detail of the piece. Again I was aided and inspired by my newly acquired knowledge of Ockeghem and Josquin des Prés. I feel that the Seventh Quartet strikes that balance of logical construction and flexibility, of accuracy of design and warmth of expression to which I have aspired throughout my career as a composer.²¹

To achieve expressiveness and warmth he devised a row with an unusual number of consonant intervals (Ex. 11). Thus, for example, the interval between the first and second tones is a perfect fourth, as is the interval between the third and fourth tones, while the interval between the fifth and sixth tones is a major third, that between the ninth and tenth a minor third, and so forth. To achieve flexibility he subdivided the twelve-tone row into four three-tone rows, to which he then applied the methods of rotation he had used in the *Lamentatio*, giving him many more versions of the row than he needed. From these he chose those versions that enabled him to create melodic themes and vertical structures having strongly harmonic-tonal qualities, though the effect was not specifically tonal. The original row (Ex. 11) never appeared in the work, but he did use three twelve-tone rows as subjects for a triple fugue in the third movement. He developed these by combining four three-note sequences taken from the many he had available from rotation. These new twelve-tone rows he neither rotated nor subdivided, but he did somewhat manipulate the secondary subjects that accompany them. Nevertheless, the effect is to make the third movement more "classical" than most of the twelve-tone music he had been composing recently.

As for the work as a whole, its five movements with their melodic lines and their suggestions of or actual major triads, major seventh and ninth chords, and other conventional chords offer an extreme contrast to the Violin Sonata. The notes that make up these chords are so distributed among the instruments that their overtones unite in singularly beautiful sonorities; and Krenek often lingered on these effects, especially in the slow second movement, as if savoring their sensual appeal. In the

The row of Krenek's *Symphonic Elegy*.



end, having touched one's feelings and then appealed to a more sober sense of form, Krenek restated motifs and fragments of motifs in the fifth movement, a rondo, and bound them together in an all-subsuming unity that both emotionally moves and intellectually excites: one is compelled to feel and think deeply by this triumph of structure, texture, expressiveness, and musical splendor.²²

Symphonic Elegy, op. 105, the other great work of the Hamline period, has the same qualities and, because it is scored for a full string orchestra, may affect some listeners even more profoundly. It is dedicated to the memory of Webern, who died in Mittersill, Austria, on September 15, 1945—shot while on an evening stroll by an American soldier who had been looking for a black marketeer. Word of his death was late in reaching Krenek, who began work on his *threnos* on January 1, 1946, and finished it on the 27th. Grave, but pensive rather than funereal, the *Elegy* stands at the zenith of Krenek's composing for orchestra, though it consists of but a single movement that lasts no more than ten minutes; only the Second Symphony compares with it in power and grandeur.

Appropriately, the work shows Webern's influence throughout, beginning with its row (Ex. 12), in which the second half is the retrograde inversion of the first half. As a whole, the row somewhat resembles that which Webern used in his String Quartet, op. 28 (1938). Other symmetries of the kind Webern liked can be identified: read backwards, the second half of the row is a transposition of the inversion of the first half, and similar relationships obtain when in the course of the work the row is subdivided into three four-tone segments or into two groups of five and seven tones. Yet in its impassioned eloquence the music is at the farthest remove from rigidity or any arithmetic mechanicalness. Krenek used these variants not, as Webern might have, to construct the greatest possible number of cross-references and other interior allusions within a severely restricted space, but rather, as with the variants he developed for the *Lamentatio* and the Seventh Quartet, to amass a rich store of lyrical motifs. Here again may be heard the rewards of Krenek's study of the fifteenth-century masters, especially in the *Elegy*'s free-flowing, irregular meters and rhythms. Beats are not fixed but, as in the *Lamentatio*, are determined by pitch, cadential effects, and nodes of force created by conjunctions among the voices. Once again Krenek used chords in a way that places the work midway between tonality and atonality, arousing expectations and maintaining dramatic urgency through tension and release effected by abrasive dissonance and mitigating consonance. The

many unison passages in proselike meters have qualities analogous to those of a solemn eulogy. And although Krenek used only strings, he achieved in the force of the attacks, the astringency of the dissonances, and the sinewy weaving of the lines a range and power comparable to that of a full orchestra. The *Elegy* is a fitting memorial to a great artist and good man.

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When the war ended in Europe on May 8, 1945, Austrians and Germans who had come to the United States to escape Hitler at once began to besiege every agency conceivable with requests for information about relatives and friends they had left behind, and tried all means of getting messages through to any who might have survived. But Krenek made no inquiries about his parents nor any effort to reach them or friends such as the Erdmanns and Webern. He spent the early part of the summer of 1945 at Bear Lake and taught in the Music Institute at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, together with Brunswick, Kolisch, Steuermann, and Sessions. That autumn he worked on an essay solicited by the Time/Life Corporation for a proposed arts magazine (the project was subsequently dropped). Not until late in the year did he finally write to his parents. His letter, though heavily censored, proceeded normally through the mails and arrived in Vienna on December 13. His father had died the day before.

He had heard of the difficulties others had encountered when trying to contact loved ones, but this obstacle scarcely accounts for his not writing sooner. A clue to the real reason may have been given in his text for the song cycle *The Ballad of the Railroads*, op. 98, which he began working on in April 1944, and in the program notes he prepared for the first performance six years later (presented during a Town Hall recital in New York by Eleanor Steber, accompanied by Mitropoulos). As can be surmised from *Jonny spielt auf* and *Santa Fe Timetable*, which followed the song cycle, railroads and rail travel fascinated Krenek and had at times an emblematic, almost mystical, significance for him. As the program notes explain,

In "The Ballad of the Railroads," many of my own emotional experiences and sentiments are reflected: the feelings of an uprooted man who entrusts himself to the trains, seeking a new home in foreign lands; hopes and fears engendered by the idea of travel; the agonies of separation and waiting; the life-long pull of the South and West; the arrival in the promised land on the shores of the Pacific, which is identified with the lost paradise of childhood.

One is reminded of Max catching the boat train and beginning his journey to the West, and of Orestes yearning for the warm South and finally making his way back to the land of his childhood.

During his own childhood Krenek had exulted in the trips to and from Innsbruck, for his childish fears of travel had been allayed by his father:

Waiting for the train at midday,
 where the tracks cut through the forest,
 was the child's delight.
 I wanted to be carried forth by the iron storm,
 and was afraid to go.
 But my father held me by my hand,
 and I could stay.
 The world was good.
 Waiting for the train at midnight
 in the vast and empty waiting room:
 grievous plight.
 I hate to be taken away from here,
 and am afraid to stay.
 But no one now is holding my hand,
 and I must go.
 The world is wrong.

The journey now is through life itself, a nightmare of loneliness, fear, missed opportunities, and threatening doom and damnation. But it turns out that Christ controls the locomotive, which merges with a Christmas toy of childhood (such as Krenek himself had been given), and Gabriel operates the switches. At the journey's end, the warm Pacific shores, the lost paradise of childhood, and Heaven itself become one.

I have arrived and I am safe . . .
 The train pulls gently in,
 the wheels stand still,
 and no one goes away.
 Someone holds my hand again.
 I shall stay.
 The world is right.

The wheels stand still because there is no life energy to turn them. The final destination is death.

Despite some felicitous images such as the "iron storm," the text, in English, is marred by clichés: "grievous plight," "howl in triumph," "overpowering might," "balmy breezes." The music, which Krenek finished in Los Angeles on August 1, 1944, after a train trip, is well below the level of *Gesänge des späten Jahres*, a cycle on similar themes. When Steber and Mitropoulos performed the work it had drama and apparent depth, and the audience liked it. The critics, however, did not. Virgil Thomson thought the cycle childish and naive, a view from which Mitropoulos could not dissuade him. In the end, its greatest interest and value lie in its self-revelation.

Never before had Krenek made so explicit his dependency on authoritative figures

such as he had known in childhood and later on, in the persons of Kraus and others. And herein may be the reason for his curious behavior toward his parents. For whereas he refers in the program notes to the agonies of separation and waiting, he may have felt unconsciously but strongly an anger with his parents, and especially his father, for having "deserted" him when he was so in need of a strong hand to hold. Irrational though it may be, such anger is common when a parent or other person on whom one greatly relies is taken by death. Krenek's parents, both of whom were very strong (even though his mother submitted to his father's will), were far away and cut off from all communication, making them dead to him during his nightmare of loneliness and fear of imprisonment. Putting off writing to them might have been a subliminal but effective way of punishing them for their failure to help. When at last he wrote, it was too late. Seventy-nine years old and severely ill, his father was visited early in December 1945 by Maria Feigl, a friend of Krenek's from Minneapolis who was in Vienna to see her family. She brought Krenek's parents their first news of him in four years. A few days later his father died.

Krenek had begun working on his elegy in memory of Webern by the time he heard of his father's death. He immediately arranged for a high mass in his father's memory at the College of Saint Catherine in St. Paul and soon after composed *In Paradisum*, op. 106, a motet for women's voices that was sung at the mass in May. But he resisted his mother's pleas for a reunion, and even after he returned to Europe in the summer of 1950 he delayed going to Vienna to see her for several weeks, even though he was less than a day's journey away. His conduct can only be explained by resentment and the self-absorption manifested in his journal.

Nor did his European friends fare better. Only Sacher heard from him, and the occasion was an inquiry about possible performances of his works. Viktor Matejka, a friend from the thirties who was the first city officer for culture and art appointed in Vienna after the war, wrote to urge Krenek to return (he also wrote in the same vein to Schönberg). August Knoll, a schoolmate and colleague in the Winter circle, tried to convince him to come back as well. Eventually Irene Erdmann wrote from Langballigau on June 26, 1947, saying that she and her husband wanted very much to reestablish old ties. Erdmann, she said, was only a shadow of himself, having grown old, weary, and gray (he was fifty-one), but he was putting together a concert program and trying a little composing.

Krenek could have returned had he wished, for on April 29, 1947, Josef Rufer, a former student and associate of Schönberg, wrote to inquire if Krenek would take over the directorship of the Berliner Hochschule für Musik (not the school he himself had attended in the twenties), which needed complete reorganization. Krenek answered late in May that he was not considering coming to Europe, since the situation was so unstable. Although he felt he had reached the limits of the improvements he could make at Hamline, his position there, he told Rufer, was satisfactory in most respects and he expected to stay. He did, however, set forth conditions

regarding faculty appointments, the curriculum, equipment, the library, and a salary; these, he said, were the only terms he could consider for the appointment, though he feared they were impossible. He was right, and there the matter ended. Yet despite what he had written about staying at Hamline, he was hoping to make a change, and had been for some time.

Three years earlier, on hearing that Carl Bricken was leaving the University of Wisconsin to become conductor of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, he had asked if this might mean there would be an opening for him, adding: "There is a certain restlessness in me, innate, or a hangover from periods of trouble and migration, which prompts me to look around for any kind of possibility of change or shift of setting."²³ This restlessness increased when Sessions, who in the spring of 1945 had accepted an appointment at the University of California, Berkeley, recommended Krenek as his replacement at Princeton, though nothing came of this. But above all, as *The Ballad of the Railroads* suggests, he wanted to move to California, and in the spring of 1946 he told Bricken: "I am still trying hard, but so far unsuccessfully, to blaze a trail out of here to the West," giving as his reasons the meager salary he received.²⁴ As part of his effort he spent the summer job hunting in Palo Alto, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. He approached Milhaud about an appointment at Mills College in Oakland, but was told there was nothing. He visited Sessions and Schönberg and managed to obtain an inconclusive interview with the chancellor of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the only outcome of which was to make him yearn all the more to leave St. Paul, which now seemed to him intolerably confining and provincial.

But he kept his feelings to himself. Thus, when he was granted a year's leave for 1947–1948 and departed for Los Angeles, everyone expected that he would return, and some even supposed he would be back by the end of the first semester. In fact, though, he planned to remain in California if he found a job; indeed, he thought he might be asked to join the faculty of UCLA, because Chancellor Dykstra told Bricken, whom he had known at Wisconsin, that Krenek was under consideration, apparently unaware that the senior members of the music department were determined that Schönberg, who had retired in 1944, would not be followed by another twelve-tone composer.

On his arrival Krenek, who was on leave without pay, took a temporary job in the extension program of Los Angeles City College (LACC), a two-year institution located downtown, where he taught evening classes on modern music and the history of opera, for which he was paid five dollars per student. Fortunately his classes were large, and as word spread some of the more adventurous students from UCLA came to hear about twelve-tone music—to the annoyance of those who were forestalling an appointment for Krenek. He also took a daytime job at the Southern California School of Music and Art, a curious academy occupying an immense old mansion on Wilshire Boulevard and having a distinguished faculty

made up mostly of European refugees, among them the conductors Klaus Pringsheim and Richard Lert. Krenek was engaged to teach courses in music history, theory, composition, and orchestration. The history classes were large, even though Krenek went far more deeply into medieval and Renaissance music than was customary even in graduate studies, while the technical courses had only four or five students, whom Krenek treated just as he had his best students at Hamline, encouraging them and suggesting strategies to deal with specific problems but never giving orders or laying down rules. But apart from a gifted teenager named Beverly Pinsky, none of them matched the students he had left behind.

Most of his students at the academy were veterans of the Second World War who had enrolled in order to receive a modest income under the G.I. Bill while they settled back into civilian life. The only music that interested most of them was jazz, and to pass the time in class they openly played cards, read newspapers, or slept, since they were not concerned with earning grades and credits. By mutual agreement they kept quiet, and Krenek did not call on them. Occasionally he would direct their attention to a musical example that he thought might appeal to them, and a few would put aside their papers or otherwise bestir themselves to listen to a Mozart aria or a movement from a Haydn quartet, but they did not bother to listen to his comments on the music. Such scenes, though comical, imposed a humiliation on Krenek that is hateful to contemplate.²⁵

Yet Krenek was so eager to stay in California that he tolerated such behavior, and, believing that he could support himself with composing and similar odd teaching jobs, he resigned his position at Hamline on December 7, 1947. President Pace accepted his resignation graciously and wished him well, but others, as Mitropoulos bluntly told him in a letter of January 5, 1948, were stunned and resentful. Students feared they would be unable to obtain the courses they needed to graduate, and Mitropoulos himself thought that with feelings against Krenek running so high in the community it would be difficult for him to schedule works by Krenek's students. The board of directors of the orchestra would now feel justified in refusing to allow works such as a symphony by Erickson, which he had planned to present but now felt he could not force through.

Krenek's response was unsympathetic. Everyone, he told Mitropoulos, had known he wanted to get away, and if the students were serious in saying that they had to study with him, let them follow him to Los Angeles as he had followed Schreker to Berlin. And why should those who hated him take it out on Erickson? This was certainly a reasonable question, but when it came to matters involving Krenek, the directors were not prepared to be reasonable.

He did not pretend that his situation was agreeable. "The teaching I am doing now is not too far above washing dishes, as compared with what I used to do at Hamline," he observed. Why, then, had he chosen it? And what, at least for himself,

could justify his inconsiderate remark regarding the students worried about being left in the lurch? "I did not leave because I was mistreated or abused," he explained, "but entirely of my own volition because I wanted to see roses and violets blossoming at Christmas time." So great had been the hold of the American Southwest on his imagination since childhood that this was no flip aside. "These I have seen," he went on, and for them he was ready to accept his condition, for "there is still hope that I may graduate from dishwasher to assistant, or God willing, to chief cook again."²⁶

But things got no better. With wartime restrictions on travel lifted and aircraft and other industrial growth booming in Southern California, people with marketable skills in search of new opportunities poured into the Los Angeles area, driving housing and other living costs sharply upward. To make ends meet Krenek began teaching in the extension program of Los Angeles State College, a four-year institution that shared quarters with LACC, and he took on a few private composition students for ten dollars an hour, in addition to his other jobs. From time to time he had the satisfaction of hearing his works performed at concerts organized by the pianist and musicologist Leonard Stein, an LACC colleague who had been a teaching assistant under Schönberg at UCLA; and during the summers of 1947 and 1948 he taught at the University of New Mexico, where his duties were light enough to permit some moments for rest and concentrated composing. While this position was more agreeable than his evening extension classes, it did not much advance his fortunes, as he was paid only nine hundred dollars for two months' work.

When he complained of being forgotten, Mitropoulos assured him of continuing support, adding: "I really miss you when I have moments of need for higher intelligent conversation. . . . [But] I have to be grateful that I met a genius like yours and that I was able to participate in its productivity and happiness."²⁷ He did as much as he could to help, including commissioning a symphony, Krenek's Fourth, which was finished in Albuquerque on July 25, 1947. By this time performance in Minneapolis was out of the question, so Mitropoulos presented it in New York on November 27, 1947, while serving as visiting conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. The response of both audience and critics was extremely chilly. Shortly afterward he conducted Schönberg's Five Orchestra Pieces, a rhapsody by Schnabel, and what he called "a nice inoffensive piece by Rathaus" (his *Vision Dramatique*, op. 55 [1945]), all of which fared better than Krenek's symphony.

A year later, Krenek's music was still anathema in New York. "That doesn't mean I will stop playing you," Mitropoulos wrote. "In fact, it looks as though I will have ten weeks [in New York] next year [i.e., 1949], and I will certainly present you again then—this time your *Elegy for Strings*, which is I think a piece to make them think a little differently, and also it is of shorter duration."²⁸ More encouraging was the news from Sessions, who reported late in 1949 that Krenek had been well received

when he had played and spoken at the University of California, Berkeley; Sessions thought this would help his continuing campaign to obtain an appointment there for his friend.

All in all, however, encouragement was meager, and Krenek felt increasingly depressed and lonely. He had not joined the circle of distinguished German and Austrian refugees living in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, although Thomas Mann, who had read *Music Here and Now* in preparation for writing *Doctor Faustus*, his novel about the demoniacal invention of the twelve-tone technique, wrote a cordial letter saying that the book had helped him in describing his fictional composer's music. Franz Werfel and Alma Mahler were often in Los Angeles for consultations on film adaptations of his novels, but Krenek rarely saw them. Kurt Weill had settled in New York, where he was having a spectacular second career as a composer of Broadway musicals such as *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus*, and *Street Scene*. George Antheil had embarked on his own second career, writing sensational copy unrelated to music for *Esquire* magazine and newspapers, while continuing to turn out film scores, an opera based on Jonson's *Volpone*, a string quartet, and a number of orchestral works of surprising popularity (his Fifth [*Joyous*] Symphony, completed in 1948, was an instant success, and for a time saw the most performances of any symphony by an American)—all of which left time for little else. Stravinsky, who was now quite frail, had isolated himself to save strength for his music and conducting. Schönberg, though now unfailingly cordial, was difficult to be with because of his extreme imperiousness and touchiness. Strangely, Krenek and Adorno made no effort to meet, though Adorno was at the time living close by in Santa Monica, where he was completing his remarkable and soon to be influential book *Philosophie der neuen Musik*. Yet they had had enthusiastic talks when Krenek first arrived in the United States, and Adorno's admiration for his music was still great. Whatever the reasons—and his own and Berta's shyness undoubtedly played a part—Krenek was now almost as alone as he had been during his last months at Vassar. He had loathed the climate of Minnesota and was now living in a better one, but in all other respects he had lost ground since leaving Hamline.

Even though his many teaching duties left little time for composing and he had no stimulus comparable to that of the ISCM gatherings in St. Paul, he completed in the spring of 1948 his Piano Sonata no. 4, op. 114, which stands with the *Lamentatio*, the Seventh String Quartet, and *Symphonic Elegy*, as one of his supreme achievements of the forties; and the following summer he finished his Sonata for Solo Violin no. 2, op. 115, which, though a minor work, is cunning and witty and deserves more widespread performance than it has had.

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The Third Piano Sonata, mentioned earlier, was Krenek's first big work after the *Lamentatio* (regardless of their unchronological opus numbers—op. 92, no. 4, and

op. 93, respectively). It was finished on May 22, 1943, and Krenek sent it at once to Schirmers, who had published his last piano music. They immediately turned it down, saying they already had a large backlog of unpublished works. (It was not published until 1960.) They might have accepted it if they had consulted Schnabel, for he esteemed it highly, calling it “a mature, clear, rich piece . . . *ein Lebewesen* [living organism]” and praising its formal unity, which he did not find in Session’s piano pieces (perhaps the recent *From My Diary*) or Hindemith’s *Tonspiel* (by which he meant the *Ludus Tonalis*). The latter, he told Krenek, moved continuously between animation and manipulation and was “good *and* bad, independent *and* un-free, original and ordinary, rich, poor, true, false, strong, weak. . . . Too bad, for he is a gifted person.”^{29*}

For the work, Krenek used a twelve-tone row made up of four three-note rows with distinctive triadic and tonal possibilities. These in turn joined in two complementary six-tone rows, which, though not in a mirror relationship, were nearly symmetrical. All of these were subjected to rotation (as was the case with the Seventh String Quartet, which followed). The first three movements appeal to the intellect, being insistently linear and contrapuntal, taut and trenchant. Schnabel particularly liked their balance of tension and integration. Yet, unlike the formidable Sonata for Violin and Piano of the same period, these movements, for all their intellectual diligence, have a verve that suggests a delight in the display of sheer mastery and inventiveness. One thinks of Bach astonishing Frederick the Great with his powers. But whereas these movements glitter, the fourth is pensive and profound, and stirs the listener with plangent chords.

The Fourth Piano Sonata resembles in its overall effect the deep-toned final portion of the Third; yet, impassioned as it is, this sonata is even more overtly intellectual than the Third. Begun on April 17 and completed on June 4, 1948, it compels one to obey the precept Krenek laid down in his inaugural lecture at Hamline: to enjoy it by experiencing “the logic of the process.” In place of the familiar exposition-development-recapitulation-and-coda format for the first movement, Krenek followed the exposition with three developments that seem to offer not the product of musical thought but the very thinking itself. With the second and third movements, however, it is as if the thinking were complete and one is given, finally, the product—solidly in place “out there,” awaiting scrutiny and appreciation. This effect is particularly strong with the third movement, a piquant and dextrous rondo that, like the first three movements of the Third Sonata, invites the listener to admire the virtuosity and wit of the composer. The last movement opens with an appealing minuet, followed by rigorous variations interrupted by a brief free fantasy: one is

*The Third Piano Sonata was a particular favorite of Glenn Gould, who recorded it for Columbia Records and chose it as the closing work for his last public recital, which took place in Chicago on Easter Sunday 1964. For the occasion he selected the three piano works he loved most, the others being Bach’s *Art of the Fugue* and Beethoven’s Piano Sonata, op. 110.

back *in media res*, listening to Krenek think his way through his structures. Then the logic of the process gives way in the *molto lento* conclusion to ambiguity, as the precise formal order is blurred by chords ending in a puzzling configuration of open fifths. Thus, in the end, this seems to be one of the most inward-looking, most manifestly "about itself," of Krenek's works. Yet for all its brooding and self-preoccupation, it is witty, urbane, courteous, even ceremonious—an extraordinarily rich, provoking, and beautiful work.

Quite different is the Piano Sonata no. 5, op. 121, which Krenek composed in the spring of 1950 on commission for Charlotte Zelka, a young and at that time unknown pianist. Now pensive in a rather self-conscious, Byronic way, then florid and even ostentatious, it is an impressive "turn" that requires the utmost boldness and prowess to carry it off. Miss Zelka needed something to bring her to the attention of the recital world, and her mother thought of asking Krenek to create a work that would be uniquely hers. They promised him a thousand dollars for it, and although he was extremely busy with other projects, he was in such need of money that he accepted the offer, producing a workmanlike piece that compels attention rather in the way the Second Symphony does. The Fifth Sonata serves well to conclude a program with a display of bravura that cannot fail to impress even the least sophisticated. It has never been published, having remained virtually, if not technically, Miss Zelka's property and a centerpiece in her long and notable career in Europe and America. Her astute mother got excellent value for her money.

In all, Krenek has written seven piano sonatas.* The First, composed in 1919 before he followed Schreker to Berlin, is a student work that signifies much talent as it veers between post-Impressionist sentiment and ebullient pyrotechnics. The Second, composed in 1928, is lively and mocking in the spirit of *Potpourri*, *Schwerge-wicht* and the *Little Symphony*, and like them shows vividly the influence of Stravinsky, Les Six, and American jazz. Though scarcely an important piece, it is filled with dash and gaiety and never fails to please. The Sixth Piano Sonata, composed in the spring of 1951, is an academic exercise in the pejorative sense of the term. Problems of manipulating the row are solved, but the music seems labored, even perfunctory, as if Krenek had found no pleasure in it. Never publicly performed or published, it has virtually disappeared.³⁰ But with the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Piano Sonatas Krenek established himself as a composer for the instrument of true distinction.

Even so, except for the Third Piano Concerto, with its curious combination of reflective lyricism and spectacular histrionics, his works for piano and orchestra are less successful. A concerto for two pianos (op. 127), written in 1951 for Arthur Whittemore and Jack Lowe (who commissioned it on the urging of Mitropoulos), is a jangling, mechanical work done to order. Little was gained by using two pianos,

*The Piano Sonata no. 7, op. 240, was commissioned by West German Radio in Cologne; completed in early 1989, after this chapter was written, it was premiered in Aachen on June 7, 1989. The author has not had an opportunity to hear or examine it.

which make the music crowded and heavy without adding to its expressiveness. As the Second and Third Symphonies and the *Symphonic Elegy* demonstrate, Krenek could compose extremely well for the orchestra, while the three sonatas just cited and other works for solo piano—such as Five Piano Pieces, op. 39 (1925), Twelve Variations for Piano, op. 79 (1937), and the *George Washington Variations for Piano*, op. 120 (1950), which erects a dazzling tower of sound on an early-nineteenth-century march into which the twelve-tone technique is gradually introduced—show that he writes equally well for the keyboard. Other than in the Third Piano Concerto, however, he has not often combined them well: either the orchestra or the piano remains somewhat unattached, or else they get in each other's way. Perhaps the idiosyncrasies that served so well when Krenek composed for solo piano prevented a symbiotic union with the orchestra.

The solo piano works are marked by clear structures etched with strong, clean, contrapuntal geometry highlighted by the tempi and dynamics. The piano seems especially well suited to those qualities of mind that also appear in his proclivity for analysis, his command of abstract theory, his nimble wit, his introspectiveness, even his mischievous pleasure in parody. The imagination so endowed produced piano works unusually replete and perfect in themselves. So, to a degree, are the piano parts of the concerti, and this quality tends to work against a union with the orchestra to produce a single musical entity. The disjunction may be grating, as in some passages of the Second Piano Concerto, or produce an effect described by an unfriendly listener as "one damn thing after another." The same might almost be said of the Third Piano Concerto if this work did not simply seize and sweep the listener away on a gorgeous tumult that permits no measured scrutiny.

Regardless of these failings, Krenek is clearly one of the foremost composers for the piano of this century. Had he written nothing else, his place in the front ranks would be assured.

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Despite the splendor of many of the works he had composed since emigrating in 1938, his status was far from assured as the forties drew to a close. Krenek was in more severe financial straits than at any time since a few days after entering the United States. The Southern California School of Music and Art was on the verge of collapse, the veterans having used up their scholarship money and moved on. Enrollments in his extension classes were declining, and his job security was in jeopardy because he had not undergone the teacher training required by the colleges offering the courses. In the fall of 1949 he received three hundred Swiss francs in payment for performances of his music in Switzerland—mostly through the sponsorship of his friend Sacher—between 1942 and 1946. But there were no other royalties from Europe, and those from the United States were extremely meager. (A measure of how little his music brought him can be seen in his Organ Sonata, op.

92, no. 1, which, published in 1941 by the New York firm of H. W. Gray, sold just twenty-five copies in ten years, earning him two dollars and twenty-five cents!) With so little coming in, he and Berta were reduced to accepting the charity of Ethel Fahnstock, a friend of Virginia Seay's parents, who let them use an empty wing of her large home in Beverly Hills.

Even so, Krenek did not respond to two tentative offers in early 1949 of teaching positions in Vienna because he would have had to submit to a multitude of troublesome regulations of the occupying governments; in any case, he considered the Vienna Conservatory and the Vienna Academy inferior institutions with apathetic students, a trade school environment, and low salaries. Though his teaching appointments in Los Angeles were scarcely better, they *were* in California.³¹ And there was another, far more compelling reason for remaining there: he had fallen in love.

His relationship with Berta had been disintegrating ever since they left St. Paul. She had no friends in vast, indifferent Los Angeles and little to do, whereas in St. Paul she had had some close friends, had been popular with the students in spite of her shyness, and had been involved in the activities of the Hamline music department and the ISCM. She had, for example, directed the staging and dancing in a performance of Stravinsky's *Histoire du soldat*, on which Krenek and Mitropoulos collaborated and which Erickson remembered as a triumph of total theater.³² Now, however, lonely and idle throughout most days, the gloom and silence broken only occasionally by an exchange of a few words with Mrs. Fahnstock, she had become bitter and melancholy. Gone was the vivacity that for so long had made her seem younger than she was, and the wide difference in age between her and Krenek now became painfully apparent. Indeed, she seemed older than her sixty-four years, and she had assumed some of the behavior of an elderly person. During the few social occasions in which the Kreneks took part she would sit silent and alone, her unhappiness spreading a pall about her and making people shy away. In addition, she had long disliked twelve-tone music, and now she made no effort to disguise her feelings, even going so far as to speak contemptuously of some of Krenek's works.

Different in every way was Gladys Nordenstrom, who had studied composition with Krenek at Hamline and, after taking her degree, had helped the Kreneks move their belongings to Los Angeles. There she had remained in hopes of finding work teaching music in the public schools and continuing her studies under Krenek. In many ways she resembled Anna Mahler, for she was young, pretty, talented, energetic, and self-reliant. Moreover, she truly understood twelve-tone music and could give Krenek the informed understanding and appreciation that Berta so lacked. Finally, though she was only half his age, she was just the kind of strong-willed, forceful person from whom Krenek had always gotten encouragement and inspiration—even when, as with Kraus, the giving was unintentional. Accustomed to making her way against considerable odds (it had not been easy for her to attend Hamline), Gladys faced the hardships of settling in Los Angeles with cheerful self-

confidence. Krenek's spirits always rose when they were together. Soon they were seriously in love. But he felt obliged to care for Berta, who had no means of support, and did not see how he could provide for her if he left her for Gladys.

Suddenly a possible way around his painful impasse appeared. The Chicago Musical College had been seeking a chairman for its composition department, and Hans Heinsheimer, now with Schirmers and as much in touch with the world of music as he had been in the old days in Vienna, recommended Krenek. A few months later the college made an offer, and on May 16, 1949, Krenek accepted appointment for three years at an annual salary of eight thousand dollars, a large sum for the time. His friends rejoiced in what they considered his good fortune, but he was at once plunged into the deepest gloom at the prospect of leaving Gladys and California—even though the appointment, if things worked out, would make their living together financially possible. Virginia Seay, who had married and moved abroad, thought his attitude unreasonable. (She did not know about Gladys.) “Really, you know,” she wrote, “Chicago isn’t exactly exile! As a matter of fact, from Dunedin[,] New Zealand [where she was living] it looks pretty damn glamorous and in the center of things. . . . Do try to find *something* positive to ‘accentuate.’”³³ (It is doubtful that Krenek understood her reference to a currently popular song that urged one to “accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, and don’t mess with Mr. In-Between.”)

Unwittingly, Krenek had signed up with a real trade school. Founded in 1867 and headed since 1927 by Rudolf Ganz, the Chicago Musical College had four thousand students, counting part-time enrollees. Almost all were hoping to make a career of performing, though few of the graduates ever managed this. Composition counted for little in the curriculum, and Krenek was wanted more for his name than for what he might accomplish in teaching. He quickly realized that he had made a major blunder. Living alone, disliking the city, and loathing its climate even more than he had loathed that of St. Paul, he could think only of hurrying back to California and Gladys. Within four days after fall term began he wrote to Paul Pisk to ask if there might be an opening for him at Redlands University, in a small city just east of Los Angeles. (There wasn’t.) By December he had endured all he could. He resigned his post and, after a quick trip to New York City to hear Mitropoulos perform the Third Piano Concerto, sped back to Los Angeles.

All that he had gotten from his Chicago experience—beyond black misery—was friendship with the composer John Becker, one of a group of American avant-garde composers that included Charles Ives and Henry Cowell. It was Becker who later commissioned Krenek’s little book on Okeghem. While Krenek was in New York, good, devoted Mitropoulos saw how miserable and desperate he was and gave him one thousand dollars to write an opera, perhaps for television (see Chapters 11 and 12).

Despite his earlier rejection of offers from Austria, he now entered into negotia-

tions for a teaching position at the Vienna International Summer Academy, and he hoped to be reappointed by Los Angeles State College. But for the moment, the commission from Mitropoulos, which included no assurance of performance, was all he had. He needed money for lawyers' fees, for while he was still in Chicago he had, without informing her, taken the first steps toward divorcing Berta. In desperation he thought of earning a little by translating, and he gladly accepted Beverly Pinsky's offer to sponsor a weekly seminar in her home on contemporary music, for which a modest admission fee would be charged. Not surprisingly, he had neither composed nor written anything for months. Now, at least, he had time to work on the opera. But after that?

He had escaped the Nazis and remained virtually untouched by the war. He had become a citizen of the United States. He had mastered new musical resources and extended the dimensions of his work. He had taught some exceptional young people who would make their marks as composers. He had written some of the finest music of the century. But looked at through ordinary eyes, he was a failure. Apart from Mitropoulos, who encountered great resistance, no one wanted to present his works, whereas those of other émigrés such as Hindemith, Milhaud, Pisk, and even Erich Korngold, whom Krenek and his Viennese colleagues had despised, were regularly performed, and Weill was making a fortune. Krenek had lost stature in the academic world, partly in light of his diminishing rank as a composer as compared with his contemporaries, but mostly because of his behavior toward Hamline and the Chicago Musical College. The University of Chicago had considered him briefly during the fall of 1949 but made no overtures. The universities of Michigan and Wisconsin did not invite him to return for summer teaching. The prospects for another summer at the University of New Mexico were uncertain (he did, in fact, return in the summer of 1951). Almost no invitations to speak or write came from anywhere in America, and very few reached him from Europe.

Yet he was at the peak of his intellectual and creative powers. He was back in the paradise, as he had called it, of California after the horrors of Chicago ("How can anyone live here?" he had asked friends) and near Gladys. Shortly before, he had been in the lowest of spirits. Now, though desperate and destitute, he was against all odds a happy man.

11 · ADVENTURES IN SERIALISM: 1950–1970

When the Second World War ended, the Allied Powers divided Austria into four zones governed respectively by England, France, the United States, and Russia. Vienna lay more than one hundred miles inside the Russian zone, but because it was the capital it, too, was divided among the four powers, though the first district, or inner city, was considered international and was supervised for three months at a time by each power in turn. A provisional government had been formed a few weeks after Russian forces captured the city in mid-April 1945. The Second Austrian Republic was recognized on January 4, 1946, and the nation's boundaries were fixed where they had been before the *Anschluss*. The State Treaty of Vienna, which restored full sovereignty to Austria, was signed on May 15, 1955, and took effect on July 27. By the time a ninety-day period stipulated in the treaty had passed, the last of the occupying forces had left the country.

At first food and fuel were short, regardless of where one lived, clothing was extremely expensive, transportation was erratic, and everywhere were reminders of the damage wrought by American bombs and Russian cannon. In Vienna both St. Stephan's Cathedral and the State Opera House were in ruins, and restoring them was urgent for civic and even national morale; but while portions of the cathedral were soon made usable for services, more than a decade was needed to repair the opera house. In the meantime performances went on in the little, unheated Theater an der Wien, often attended by uniformed Russian officers and bureaucrats whose demeanor gave no hint of their reaction to the musical splendor of a company that included Irmgard Seefried, Sena Jurinac, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Elisabeth Höngen, Hilde Güden, Hilde Zadek, George London, Paul Schöffler, Anton Dermota, Julius Patzak, and Erich Kunz. Things improved after 1947 with the European Recovery Program (more commonly known as the Marshall Plan), through which

the United States delivered goods that were passed on to Austria's industrial and commercial concerns. Recovery was slow at first, but steady, for Austrians put aside many of their political and other differences in a united effort to make the country self-sufficient.

In Germany all government ceased with the surrender on May 8, 1945, and responsibility for the nation was assumed by the four Allied Powers. As in Austria, the country was divided into zones, with Berlin, like Vienna, lying far within the Russian zone but occupied by all four. Antagonisms between the United States and the Soviet Union made it plain that the original plan of the Allies to treat Germany as a single economic entity would not work. Meanwhile the German people suffered from famine, lack of housing, and extreme demoralization. The economy was stagnant, and black markets flourished. But when the Marshall Plan was put into operation in the western zones, recovery began at once and proceeded so swiftly that it was dubbed, rightly, an "economic miracle." On May 23, 1949, the constitution of the Federal Government of Germany was put into force in the western sector. In the Russian sector the constitution of the German Democratic Republic was adopted just one week later, and a government was formed in October 1949.

Even before the economy improved government officials in West Germany and Austria supported music and drama as much as they could for the sake of morale and the recovery of prestige and self-esteem. With regard to contemporary works their attitude was like that of the Weimar leaders, but for very different reasons. They wanted to make a new start and mark the difference between themselves and the Nazis, who had suppressed all experimental art. Directors of theaters and opera houses sought to catch up with developments that had taken place in the West since the thirties, while in both countries government radio and, later, television stations were expected to give considerable attention to new music.

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At the war's end, twelve-tone music was almost wholly unknown among the younger musicians of Western Europe. In Vienna, Hans Erich Apostel, who had studied under both Schönberg and Berg, taught the technique to a few students, and in Munich, where it had been banned for many years, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, an admirer of Berg, established a concert series in which twelve-tone music was played. In Paris, René Leibowitz, a theory and composition instructor at the Conservatory, in 1947 published *Schönberg and His School*, the first full-length study of the twelve-tone pioneers, and founded the International Festival of Contemporary Chamber Music, at which their works were performed. Even before the festival, Pierre Boulez, who was just twenty at the time, heard Leibowitz conduct Schönberg's Wind Quintet, op. 26, one of the first and most important twelve-tone compositions, and found it a revelation. In 1946, after private studies with Leibo-

witz, Boulez composed his first twelve-tone music and began campaigning so hard on behalf of the technique that in two years he was the acknowledged leader of a small but unusually energetic group of French twelve-tone composers. In Italy, Hermann Scherchen, who had spent the war years in Switzerland, was encouraging talented young Luigi Nono and Bruno Maderna to explore the technique.

Two critically important developments occurred as knowledge of twelve-tone music spread. Olivier Messiaen, a basically conservative composer who also taught at the Paris Conservatory, suggested that the row technique might be applied to other aspects of music besides pitch—to the duration of the notes (something that Berg had already tried in his opera *Lulu*) or even to timbres and intensities. Boulez, who was now studying with him, was intrigued by the idea and began thinking about how it might be done. Meanwhile, Pierre Schaeffer, a technician at the government radio station in Paris, had been experimenting with recording real-life sounds and distorting them by altering their pitches, reproducing them backwards, and mixing them together. He called the results “musique concrète,” and when they were first broadcast on October 4, 1948, they immediately captured the interest of composers, among them Messiaen and Boulez. The latter soon went to study with Schaeffer.

Meanwhile, in Darmstadt, Wolfgang Steinecke—not a composer or teacher, but a critic with a vision and a flair for communicating it—persuaded the mayor, who hoped to make the rebuilt city a cultural center, to back him in establishing the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik (International Summer Courses on New Music) for the specific purpose of acquainting young composers with the music that had been banned under Hitler. The first classes were held from August 25 through September 29, 1946, in Schloss Kranichstein, a charming little castle outside the city that had once served as the hunting lodge of the grand dukes of Hesse-Darmstadt. When the program outgrew the castle, Steinecke moved it to a compound in the suburb of Marienhohe that was owned by the Seventh Day Adventists. Formally established in 1948 as an annual summer offering of the city, the program was called the Kranichsteiner Musikinstitut in honor of its birthplace. As word spread it became known as the Darmstadt Summer School, or simply the Darmstadt School, an appellation that was also used to designate the group of young composers who soon made it notorious throughout the music world.¹

When the courses were started, “new music” meant the works of Stravinsky, Bartók, and Hindemith, though a class on twelve-tone music was available. All this changed when Leibowitz came to the third session in 1948, for he not only taught the technique both systematically and with impassioned partisanship but also arranged for performances of works by Schönberg and the then almost entirely unknown Webern. This innovation so altered the intellectual climate of the school that in 1949 Steinecke invited Schönberg to come from Los Angeles and teach. The invitation was declined because Schönberg was in poor health, but his friend Josef

Rufer came and helped prepare a festival of Schönberg's music, much of which had never before been heard in Germany. Messiaen was also present and while there composed a piano piece, *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités* (Mode of values and intensities), in which he used preformed patterns somewhat analogous to twelve-tone rows to determine not only pitches but also time durations and dynamics, as the title suggests. Though now little known, this work was to have a profound influence on the younger Darmstadt set.

Meanwhile, Herbert Eimert, with support from scientists at the University of Bonn, was trying to persuade the North-West German Radio (NWDR) to set up an electronic studio at its Cologne station. In time he succeeded, and the studio was opened to a few experimenters in 1951.

Eimert, who was born in 1897, was a calm and gentle man and a true innovator who had used a version of the twelve-tone technique even before Schönberg did. Unrecognized as a composer, he supported himself by writing music criticism and organizing radio lectures. With his patience, amiability, and deep knowledge of theory, he was well qualified to run the studio, but he lacked the toughness needed to cope with the aggressive young men who would soon be nagging him to let them use his equipment. From the beginning he worked with magnetic tape rather than records and with sounds generated by audio oscillators rather than sounds taken from real life, which set him off from Schaeffer. But because of the laborious cutting, splicing, and overdubbing that were required before synthesizers became readily available in the mid-sixties, working with tape went slowly: the first demonstration of electronic sounds did not take place until the spring of 1953, while the first broadcast of electronic music had to wait until October 19, 1954. It featured compositions by Eimert and the studio's young assistant director, Karlheinz Stockhausen.

The most audacious, creative, and influential composer of electronic music of his generation, Stockhausen, who was born in 1928 in a suburb of Cologne, began the serious study of composition in 1950 and was soon deeply versed in the music of Schönberg. Hearing of this interest, Eimert invited him to give a series of talks on Cologne's NWDR. Their relation prospered, and after Stockhausen had spent an interval in Paris, where he studied with Messiaen, worked in Schaeffer's studio, and met Boulez, Eimert hired him as a permanent collaborator. In the summer of 1951 Stockhausen attended the courses in Darmstadt, and on his return the following year he became the center of attention when Boulez, who was now well known (though more for his polemicizing than his music), conducted Stockhausen's *Kreuzspiel* (Crossplay), a pointillist work for ten instruments much influenced by Messiaen's *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités*.

The performance caused a great commotion among the students, few of whom were anywhere nearly as adventuresome as these two. Stockhausen encouraged those who did show innovativeness to come to Cologne and try out the new elec-

tronic equipment. Some who took him up on this would, with Boulez and Stockhausen, become famous figures of their generation: Karel Goeyvaerts, Henri Pousseur, Nono, and Maderna, and later on Mauricio Kagel and György Ligeti. But Boulez, who had not been impressed by his experience at Schaeffer's studio and found it tedious to work as slowly as the early equipment made necessary (it took days to prepare a few centimeters of tape), kept aloof, though he and Stockhausen were close collaborators in other respects. As the young composers labored, Eimert played a role similar to that of Georg Schünemann in the days when Krenek attended the Hochschule in Berlin, encouraging them and seeking opportunities to have their music heard.

To deal with the bewildering abundance of materials that the equipment made available to them, the composers turned to serialism, toward which Messiaen had pointed the way. In serialism, all of the elements, and not just the tones, are, at least in theory, arranged in rows or series.* Since some of these elements, such as durations, densities (the number of tones sounding at a given instant), and dynamics, are defined quantitatively (the difference between loud and soft, for instance, being a matter of quantitative degree), the young serialists decided to take their quantities from the sizes of the intervals between the notes in a twelve-tone row. Suppose, for example, one chose a tone row that began with G–B-flat–A–D–E–C. The sizes of the intervals between these notes, measured in half-steps, are 3-1-5-2-4, quantities that could be applied to the quantitatively defined elements in a serial composition. Those such as timbres, which are not quantitatively determined, are simply assigned numbers from the intervallic sequence. By basing all rows on the original tone row, the serialists believed that they would impose a degree of unity and coherence on the music that even an uninformed listener would sense and respond to.

But there was a problem. A tone row could be reversed, turned upside down, and turned upside down *and* reversed. It could also be transposed. But quantitative rows could only be reversed, the immediate result being repetition and monotony, even something resembling motifs and themes, which the serialists regarded as outmoded and banal. To get around this problem they rotated both the tone row and the quantitative row based on it.†

The method of rotation had to be carefully worked out, or else the original series would quickly reappear. For example, if one began with a series the first six units of which we shall call U-V-W-X-Y-Z and proceeded by switching the first and second

* "Serialism" is often used to designate the twelve-tone technique, in which case the term "total serialism" or "integral serialism" refers to the technique in which *all* the elements are treated serially. In his writings on the subject, however, Krenek never uses "serialism" for the twelve-tone technique; he uses it only where others would use "total serialism" or "integral serialism." The author has chosen to follow his example. In this account, therefore, "serialism" always refers to the later, more elaborate technique.

† Krenek, as was pointed out earlier, liked to say that in *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* he used rotation long before the Darmstadt-Cologne group did. But as he had not said this in print when they adopted rotation, and as it is exceedingly unlikely that they knew of this work, one can assume that they were ignorant of Krenek's priority.

elements, the third and fourth, and the fifth and sixth, one got the series V-U-X-W-Z-Y, which is certainly different from the original. But if one applied the same method a second time, one got U-V-W-X-Y-Z! The serialists thus took to preparing elaborate tables of numbers—or matrices, as they came to be called—to guide the switching. They even adopted formulas for reading these matrices from several directions. Whatever system of rotation was used, though, one eventually got back to the original series, and this gave the serialists a stopping point that would otherwise be lacking in this athematic music. A work was finished just before the row on which it was based reappeared in its first configuration. But whether the work was long or short, whether one used all the patterns from a matrix or just a few, once rotation was applied to all of the elements, a work was wholly predetermined. All that the composer did by way of creation was invent the original row, choose the sound sources (which might include a human voice, though it, too, would be subject to the same predetermining serialism), and work out the system of rotation. The charge made years before that twelve-tone music confined the composer to copying out what had been fixed in advance had, at least in theory, come true in serial music. (As Schönberg had argued, and as his and many other works demonstrated, a twelve-tone composer was at least as free as a conventionally tonal composer, if not more so. This was not true of the serialist.)

Serialism had immense appeal for who tried it. None of the effects that by long-standing convention evoked emotion could appear in serial music, which was anti-romantic, austere, intellectual, and wholly cut off from the past. It was a new beginning for a new generation. Although Milton Babbitt had since 1947 been trying serialism in varying degrees, starting with the organization of duration, Boulez alone or Boulez and Stockhausen are usually given credit for “inventing” the system, since Messiaen had not applied the series of *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités* in any systematic fashion.

In 1951, Boulez took a tone row from Messiaen's piece and used it to create *Structures Ia* for two pianos, the first attempt at total serialization. In it the series for duration and dynamics came from the tone row, which he rotated, but other elements were fashioned from series created differently though involving no less predetermination. He promptly followed this work with *Polyphonie X*, commissioned by the revived Donaueschingen Festival of 1951 and composed for eleven winds and seven strings with the instrumentation treated serially.

It remained for Stockhausen to take the final step in his own first serial work, *Kontra-Punkte*, composed in 1952 for ten sharply contrasted instruments. *Kreuzspiel*, which had caused the uproar at Darmstadt, was not truly serial, though it employed an elaborately patterned exchange among the instruments and served in some respects as a stimulus and model for Boulez's *Polyphonie X*. In *Kontra-Punkte* he tried, not entirely with success, to organize *all* aspects of the music on the same series, achieving—ideally, anyway—a measure of integration and unity not reached

by Boulez. Given its premiere under the direction of Scherchen by NWDR on the night following the first broadcast of electronic music (which included Stockhausen's own *Studie I*), *Kontra-Punkte* helped to bring him the sort of notoriety that the Second Symphony had earned for Krenek three decades earlier.

Nineteen fifty-two was a big year at Darmstadt for the young experimenters, who formed themselves into an inner group of adepts comparable to the elect who gathered around Schönberg in the twenties. Boulez, then attending the summer courses for the first time, brought with him an aura of scandal created by his essay "Schönberg Is Dead," published in the May issue of *The Score* (London). "Since the discoveries made by the Viennese, all composition other than the twelve-tone is useless," he wrote. Nevertheless, Schönberg had quickly reached a dead end because he had persisted in using traditional forms. "The fundamental reason for the stalemate lies in his misunderstanding of the FUNCTIONS arising from the very principle of the series." Schönberg should have invented serialism then and there, but instead he misdirected twentieth-century music for years. Therefore, Boulez asserted, it behooved today's composers to remember that Schönberg is dead (he had, in fact, died in Los Angeles on July 13, 1951) and get on with the business he left unfinished.²

As noted above, Boulez directed the performance of Stockhausen's *Kreuzspiel* that year at Darmstadt, and his own Second Piano Sonata, which had itself created a stir when first performed in 1948, was presented and awed the listeners with its power and all but insuperable demands on the pianist (who was not Boulez). By all accounts Boulez and Stockhausen dominated the scene, much as they and their associates, with their self-conscious exclusiveness, their mysterious jargon derived from physics and mathematics, and their trick of making themselves sought after by timely withdrawals and scornful silences, would dominate the gatherings of the ISCM and other festivals for nearly two decades. At Darmstadt and Cologne they formed a power bloc that treated with indifference or contempt the music of any composer not part of their group—all except John Cage, who repaid them by treating them (though more wittily) with the same contempt they accorded others.

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Early in 1950, as he was sorting out his life after his flight from Chicago, Krenek received a letter from Steinecke inviting him to spend two weeks in August teaching composition at the Kranichsteiner Musikinstitut. He had already been invited to participate in a summer seminar at Salzburg, and since both Darmstadt and Salzburg lay in an American zone, it seemed safe to accept. A return to Europe would make a pleasant change after Chicago and would help fill the time until his divorce became final and he could marry Gladys Nordenstrom. He told Steinecke that he would come and made plans to fly from New York to Zürich, where Scherchen, prompted by Willi Reich, planned to have him conduct on his birthday his Fifth

Symphony, op. 119, which he had completed in Albuquerque in the summer of 1949. He would be able to make a quick trip to Basel for a meeting with Sacher, who was also interested in the Fifth Symphony, and although the deep chill of the Cold War made him very nervous about traveling through the Russian zone of Austria, he hoped to manage a short reunion with his mother. She, of course, was almost beside herself with excitement at the prospect. She still lived in the apartment at Argauergasse 3, where Krenek had been born. Even though it was in the American sector and she was surrounded by the families of American soldiers and officials, their presence did little to reassure her. She had filled her letters with her fears that she would never see him again. Now that he was coming at last, could he bring her two pairs of nylon stockings?

Steinecke's invitation was but one of a number of encouraging signs of European interest in Krenek and his music. His Third Piano Sonata had been performed at the Institut during the 1949 session (this helped to spur Steinecke), and earlier that summer his *Kafka Songs*, op. 82, which he had composed while on his first trip to the United States in 1937, had been performed at the First Dodecaphonic Congress in Milan. But the musical entrepreneurs of West Germany were most interested in his operas. *Karl V* was given its German premiere in Essen on March 25, 1950, and was a great success, for its political message fitted very well with the feelings of the audience, first because so many wished to repudiate Hitler, and second because the threat posed by the Russians to a divided Germany was very like that posed by Suleiman I to Karl's divided empire. Its political message also helped to make a great success of *Tarquin*, which had its first full performance on July 16, 1950, in the State Theater of Cologne during the celebration of the nineteen hundredth anniversary of the founding of the city.

But Krenek was not present. He had taken a train to New York in late June, planning to fly from there to Zürich; however, as he crossed the country the Korean War broke out, and shortly after his arrival on the East Coast President Truman committed American soldiers to the defense of South Korea. In the United Nations the Russian delegation made such menacing remarks that Krenek became convinced war was imminent in Europe; he therefore canceled his flight and returned to Los Angeles. His mother was almost prostrated with disappointment, which she poured out in letter after letter. Then the war slowed near the thirty-eighth parallel. The Russians still talked threateningly, but they did not act, and Krenek decided it was safe to fulfill his teaching engagement in Darmstadt. In the meantime his divorce had become final, so now Gladys could go with him. They were married on August 8 at Los Angeles City Hall and Krenek set off at once for Zürich.

In some respects Gladys resembled Anna Mahler, though she was many times more mature and practical, and she was glad to manage their affairs so that he would have more time for his music. But she would never have an influence on his work, despite her own musical knowledge and the fact that her compositions had merit of

their own (they were performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington and other important concert sites), for the Kreneks made it a practice never to discuss works in progress, and he never consulted her about a project he was pondering. Her role in relation to Krenek's music was to facilitate its creation and performance in every way she could, with the result that her own composing often had to be set aside, sometimes at moments when it was going particularly well. But she accepted this, and many of Krenek's finest works, especially some created in his later years at times when his health was problematical, might never have come into being but for her care and devotion.

When they arrived in Darmstadt, Krenek was both appalled and pleased by the Kranichsteiner Musikinstitut, now housed in the Seventh Day Adventist compound in the city—appalled by the dreadful living conditions and the food, which the church group had contracted to supply, and by the absence of wine.* (The food was so bad that he supposed it had to be because of the postwar restrictions still in force; then a friend took Krenek to dinner at a Darmstadt hotel, and he realized that the food at the Institut was uniquely awful.) Nevertheless, he was pleased by the respectful attitude of the students and their interest in twelve-tone music—though he wished they were better prepared. He also got much pleasure from a special program of his music presented in honor of his fiftieth birthday, which, as he well knew, would have passed unnoticed in America. He himself played his Third and Fourth Piano Sonatas and joined Michael Mann, the youngest son of Thomas Mann, in a performance of his Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 117 (1948). Also during his stay his Fourth Symphony was conducted by Scherchen. All of these works pleased the audiences and the critics, who went out of their way to mention his birthday and the good fortune of his return to Europe. All told, he was hearing words of welcome and approval such as he had not enjoyed in many years. Steinecke, too, was pleased and invited him to return in 1951.

Krenek had postponed going to Vienna for fear that during this time of international tension he, as an American citizen, might not be able to get back from so deep within the Russian zone of Austria; thus, after Darmstadt he filled a number of engagements, which included conducting his Fifth Symphony at the Venice Biennale. His mother, who had been waiting weeks since hearing of his return to Europe, was hurt by his apparent indifference to their reunion. Other families were together again, she wrote him; perhaps she should give up thoughts of her son and look instead to joining "good Papa."³ Finally, in mid-September, he and Gladys arrived in Vienna. From letters Krenek's mother had liked Gladys very much, and this new bond helped her recover from the anxiety and disappointment she felt over

*The Seventh Day Adventists absolutely prohibited alcoholic beverages on their property, which caused considerable dismay. To get around this lack students and faculty left the compound to obtain and consume wine elsewhere, though soon there was a clandestine source on the property from whom one could purchase what was carefully described as "white grape juice."

the long delay. After a few days in the city—during which Krenek arranged to deposit in the City Library the papers his parents had preserved for him, and gave a talk on his years in America, after which Julius Patzak sang selections from *Reisebuch*—he and his mother went to Basel for a visit with Paul and Maja Sacher, who had faithfully befriended Krenek's mother and now offered to pay her way to Los Angeles the next year. Krenek hedged on this, but the visit was a joyous one, and after a stay with the Gublers in Winterthur and stops at Innsbruck, Cologne (where they attended a later performance of *Tarquin*), and Amsterdam, he returned to California in mid-October and moved with Gladys into a small home in North Hollywood.

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Their home could be no more than modest, for their financial situation was difficult and would remain so for the next few years, though Krenek's music continued to be well received abroad. *Leben des Orest* was an indisputable triumph when it opened in Frankfurt near the end of January 1951. It had been preceded a fortnight earlier by a "Krenek hour" at the university, when his First String Quartet and selections from *Reisebuch* were performed and Adorno, who had left the United States and joined the faculty there, gave a talk about his music. Favorable stories in the press helped build interest in the opera, which made such a hit on opening night that thirty-three curtain calls were made. But this was music that Krenek had written before his emigration, and it earned him no royalties because any money collected by Universal Edition, who had published it and was now back in business in Vienna, went to the Custodian of Alien Properties in Washington, and Krenek's attempts over the next few years to obtain the sums accumulating there were of no avail. Associated Music Publishers, the supposed U.S. representative of Universal Edition, made no effort to promote his music, were frequently unable to supply copies of it to performers, and often did not bother to answer his letters of inquiry.⁴ The severity of his situation can be seen in his fourth-quarter 1950 ASCAP earnings (he had joined in 1947): exactly seventeen dollars.

Although he had succeeded in rejoining the extension faculties of Los Angeles City College and Los Angeles State College on his return from Chicago, at the end of the spring term of 1951 he lost those appointments because of too few students. People in the Los Angeles area who wanted to hear what he had to say had by now already taken his courses. Roger Sessions, now at the University of California, Berkeley, was on sabbatical leave in 1951–1952 and tried to have Krenek hired as his replacement, but despite some desultory interest, in the end no replacement was engaged. Krenek did manage a return to the University of New Mexico for the summer session of 1951, but plans to bring him back in 1953 were canceled for lack of funds.

What kept the Kreneks afloat in these lean years was the money Gladys earned

teaching music in the public schools and commissions for Krenek, several of them the direct result of efforts by Mitropoulos. One project was the chamber opera that Mitropoulos himself had commissioned in 1949. Using an idea suggested by Melville's short story "The Confidence Man," Krenek had begun work in January 1950 on the libretto of a one-act opera intended for either television or the stage. He completed the opera, which he titled *Dark Waters* (op. 125), the following June. Heinsheimer tried to rouse some interest in it, but after the National Broadcasting Company turned it down neither he nor Mitropoulos could persuade anyone else to take it up. Eventually a truncated first performance conducted by Wolfgang Martin was presented by an opera workshop group at the University of Southern California School of Music in early 1951, but Krenek received next to nothing from this (this and other Krenek operas composed between 1950 and 1970 are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 12).

Meanwhile, loyal Mitropoulos continued to campaign and eventually obtained the commission from Lowe and Whittemore for the two-piano concerto discussed in Chapter 10. Then other, quite unexpected commissions arrived. When Morris Molin, a well-to-do Los Angeles businessman, asked Krenek through an intermediary to write a piano piece for his daughter Miriam, Krenek promptly turned out the *George Washington Variations* described earlier. This work so pleased the Molins that they asked him to compose a full piano concerto for a fee of one thousand dollars. The father warned that the work must be the finest of his career, to which Krenek replied stiffly that everything he composed was the best that he could create.⁵ Despite such effrontery he was in no position to refuse the commission, and while in Europe during the summer of 1950 he worked on what was to become his Fourth Piano Concerto, op. 123, completing it soon after his return to Los Angeles. Mr. Molin, a man of expansive turn of mind, hoped that Mitropoulos would invite his daughter to perform the piece with the New York Philharmonic, but it was not heard until the autumn of 1951, when Krenek himself conducted a performance in Cologne with, of course, Miss Molin at the piano. The first American performance had to wait until 1965.

This work was followed by the Double Concerto for Violin and Piano, op. 124, contracted by George Anjemian of Columbia Records for his daughters and finished in less than a month, after completion of the piano concerto. The double concerto had its premiere at the Donaueschingen Festival in the autumn of 1951, with Krenek conducting. His next commission, the Concerto for Harp, op. 126, which he composed for Edna Philipps, a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra, at the request of Miss Philipps's husband, who paid Krenek one thousand dollars for his efforts, was completed in February 1951. When it seemed that it might never be played, his benefactor wrote: "I have almost arrived at the conclusion that all I have succeeded in doing with you is to add a work to the literature which will have limited possibilities for performance."⁶ Eventually Eugene Ormandy, the permanent con-

ductor at Philadelphia, agreed to do it, and while both he and Miss Philipps's colleagues in the orchestra liked the piece when it was premiered in December 1952, the audience did not; in the end her husband's sour observation proved to be correct, for the concerto, though an agreeable minor work, has rarely been performed.

The work for harp was followed later by the Cello Concerto no. 1, op. 133, commissioned by Margaret Aue and completed in March 1953; she gave its first performance a year later with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra under Alfred Wallenstein. Also noteworthy is *Phantasiestück*, op. 135, a work for cello and piano written in 1953 on a commission from Hans Battmann of Luzern, with whom Krenek performed it the following April.

These commissioned works were journeyman stuff—competent, craftsmanlike, unambitious; written not from some inner drive but, as Krenek admitted later, simply for the money he so desperately needed. For despite all the flattering notices coming from Europe, at one point he was at such a low ebb financially that in desperation he wrote to Heinsheimer proposing that he do a German translation of Menotti's *The Consul*. His friend had to tell him it had already been done.⁷

Two commissioned works, however, towered above the rest: *Medea*, op. 129, a "monologue for mezzo-soprano and orchestra" composed over three weeks in June 1951 on a commission from Blanche Thebom (obtained with the help of Mitropoulos); and the Violin Concerto no. 2, op. 140, commissioned by the West German Radio-Cologne for violinist Tibor Varga and composed during the winter of 1953–1954. The monologue had for a text selections made by Miss Thebom herself from a poetic drama by Robinson Jeffers, and Krenek wrote a vocal part that gets the most from the poet's spectacular, pulsing lines without giving way to their incipient crassness and melodrama; the part is backed by superb orchestration. Although the lines are long and the pace slow, the work seems charged with barely contained passion and energy. Miss Thebom thought the subject and Krenek's vocal treatment ideal for a mezzo-soprano; her judgment was backed at the premiere in Philadelphia on March 13, 1953, by Ormandy and the members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, who gave her a resounding "Bravo!" and by the audience, which brought her back five times for bows. When she sang the work again in 1954 at the Vienna Festival and the Darmstadt summer courses, it was just as successful. David Drew, a rather disaffected critic, thought it a "curious and unexpected lapse into the nineteenth century" yet had to admit that

on a fairly low level, it is astonishingly effective. The general public at Darmstadt were plainly thrilled by it, and recalled the composer and the soloist . . . numerous times. . . . Someone [Drew himself, perhaps?] described the piece as "a poor man's Erwartung." Neither the enthusiasm of the many, nor the scorn of the few, was without justification. But it was noticeable that none of the other works by Krenek given at Darmstadt [*Dark Waters* was one] aroused anything like such strong feelings either way.⁸

It is certainly one of Krenek's most powerful works, comparable in many respects with the Second Symphony.

Even more powerful is the tremendous Second Violin Concerto, by far the finest work from Krenek since the Fourth Piano Sonata of six years earlier. Taut, fiery, and daring, it gives the impression at moments of shaking under the stress of a violence that will tear it apart. At such times the orchestral portion seems to be at the ragged limit of control, yet the score is one of Krenek's most tightly constructed. Unlike the other concerti of this period, it deserves to be recovered from the obscurity in which it has lingered ever since its first performance in Cologne by Varga with the WDR orchestra directed by William Steinberg.

Krenek's other major work of the early fifties is his opera *Pallas Athene weint* (Pallas Athena weeps), op. 144, which he began on July 13, 1952, and completed on June 15, 1953, then revised in 1955 before its premiere at the Hamburg State Opera that October 17. The work has many passages of somber grandeur and interludes of luminous beauty, so that the overall effect is one of imposing splendor; yet it is too long, and some of the music, like certain of the commissioned works, is little more than a craftsmanlike filling of space. Except for the magnificent outbursts of *Medea* and the Second Violin Concerto, Krenek seemed almost to be marking time in these years. Indeed, he himself began to wonder if he were approaching the close of a period that began when he adopted the twelve-tone technique.

He had accepted Steinecke's invitation to return to Darmstadt in 1951, and while he was abroad he attended the Donaueschingen Festival, where he heard Boulez's *Polyphonie X* and thought it, as he told Claudia Zenck many years later, "an entirely new sound . . . magnificent."⁹ But he did not return to Darmstadt until 1954, and thus he missed the critical summers of 1952 and 1953 when the Boulez-Stockhausen clique was forming. Upon his return, and again when he visited Darmstadt in 1956 and 1958, he was ignored by those who now set the intellectual tone. He approached the young avant-gardists cordially, but they treated him as an intruder—one who, as Boulez saw those outside the in-group, was misdirected by Schönberg and thus not really a contemporary composer.

There may have been some jealousy and fear as well. Apart from Hindemith, who came in 1948 and never returned, Krenek was the biggest "name" among the composers, and considerable attention was given to his works. Moreover, his phenomenal analytical skill was at once apparent in his lectures, and Wilbur Ogdon, who was in touch with him through these years, has suggested that the clique worried that if Krenek were invited to their discussions he might take over and beat them at their own game.¹⁰ In fact, if he had been present when Stockhausen and Boulez were extolling the virtues of serialism and Eimert was explaining what could be done with electronic music, he would have been sympathetic, for, as he had shown many times before, he was drawn toward formulas, diagrams, and puzzles and the arcane aspects of science and technology. He had the temperament to respond to Boulez's inge-

nious rotations and matrices and Stockhausen's diagrammatically constructed *Kreuzspiel*, though doubtless he would have irked them by pointing out that he had used rotation a full decade earlier. As it was, he learned about serialism secondhand, and by the time it seriously engaged his attention, the clique had given it up.

Electronic music was another matter. Since 1948 Krenek had been thinking about a *Pfingstoratorium* (Whitsun oratorio) that would require timbres which no instrument known to him could produce. Yet for some reason the lectures on the potential of electronic music given at Darmstadt in 1951 made slight impression on him. In the end, the most significant outcome of the encounter was a friendship with Eimert that would last until the latter's death in 1972. What did impress him was what he learned in the spring of 1952 about a gigantic synthesizer being built at the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) laboratories in Princeton. He had been invited to speak at a conference on creativity (he was to cover the fine arts) sponsored by the Olin Corporation. While attending the talks concerning other fields he heard mention of the RCA machine and immediately surmised that it could create the effects he wanted for his oratorio. Therewith he began an exasperating and often comical campaign to gain access to the synthesizer that went on for a decade.

Harry F. Olson, the head of the RCA project, cared little about music and was not impressed by Krenek's name or his appeals, which he treated as a nuisance. At one point he suggested that Krenek apply to Victor Records, for whom he and his assistants were building a second machine. "They have musicians," he explained. "We are engineers not musicians."¹¹ In this and other ways he rebuffed Krenek, but in the end Krenek prevailed, and in the late spring of 1962, after the machine had been placed under the joint control of Princeton and Columbia Universities and moved to New York City, he began working with it using intricate calculations he had prepared some years earlier. But the machine kept breaking down, and since the engineer who could repair it showed up only once a week, Krenek, not wishing to wait around in New York, gave up in disgust; in any case, by this time he had access to other synthesizers. Milton Babbitt, a member of the Princeton department of music, fared better with the RCA synthesizer and in time was placed in charge of the New York electronic studio maintained by the two universities. He realized much music on the machine, but only he and Charles Wuorinen really used it, for smaller, comparatively inexpensive, and much more easily operated synthesizers eventually became widely available.

Back when he was first seeking permission to use the RCA monster Krenek was still in something of a musical doldrums and still facing severe financial hardships. In 1953 he estimated that with his obligations to Berta he needed an income of at least eight hundred dollars a month, but he was taking in less than half that amount.¹² A national depression had forced the University of New Mexico to jettison plans to have him teach in the summer, and when he approached the University of Michigan he was told that there was not money enough even for guest lecturers.

The pianist Glenn Gould, who greatly admired Krenek's music, arranged a fortnight's guest appearance in July at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, which was highly agreeable and got the Kreneks through two weeks, but it brought in little money. Earlier that year Krenek had been so desperate that he wrote to the Southern Music Publishing Company and suggested that he write "semi-classical items" for them—material for musical comedies, easy piano pieces, something "in the popular vein. . . . I have always felt," he observed, "that this field is not entirely foreign to my possibilities as a composer (see *Jonny spielt auf*, etc.), and I thought I might just as well try to exploit this approach. . . . I would consent to any kind of public use only on condition that a pseudonym is used instead of my name."¹³ They were polite but not interested.

He also wrote to the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and the directors of the orchestras of Louisville, Kansas City, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and Rochester suggesting that he compose commissioned works for them, but to no avail. Maurice Abravanel, director of the Utah Symphony, to whom he also wrote, replied that he was shocked that Krenek had been reduced to soliciting work. "It is really a sad state of affairs that a composer like you has to write to a conductor like me." He had found *Symphonic Elegy* "exceedingly beautiful," but he could not risk playing Krenek's music, for his orchestra was entirely dependent on ticket sales. "The choice is not between playing more conservative or more adventurous programs," he explained, "but between playing and not playing, period."¹⁴

Krenek's friends, on learning of his difficulties, tried to help. Emy Rubensohn, in whose home Krenek had lived when working for Bekker in Kassel, was now widowed and living in New York City, whence she showered him with cheery letters, sometimes writing one a day for three days in a row. She even paid his expenses so he could come to the city in January for a program in his honor put on by Mitropoulos, Herta Glatz (now a star with the Metropolitan Opera Company), and the Friends of New Music. It was a success with the audience but not a happy affair for Krenek, who had difficulty in obtaining from the Friends the small fee due him for his part in the program. Soon afterward Mitropoulos kindly sent him an outright gift of one thousand dollars, saying, "Please do not feel in any way embarrassed by it. You know what your existence as a composer means to me and that I wish you could gladly accept whatever is in my power to do."¹⁵ Gubler tried to arrange recitals in Winterthur and Zürich, and Sacher, who would later commission another orchestral work, showed his support by many kindnesses to Krenek's mother, with whom he always had dinner when he came to Vienna to conduct. He and his wife also sent her scarce food items such as fine coffee at Christmas and helped her with the expenses of modest vacations. Eimert, too, was on the lookout for Krenek; it was he who eventually obtained the commission for the Second Violin Concerto.

Far more significant in the long run was the encouragement Eimert gave to Krenek's awakening interest in electronic music. On February 20, 1954, he wrote

saying that Stockhausen, Goeyvaerts, and Pousseur had tried their hands at it in his Cologne studio and that Boulez was coming in March to look things over. When Krenek replied that he, too, was interested, Eimert assured him that he did not need to learn the "whole Chinese trumpery" or any complicated apparatus, since technicians could take care of much of the work. The important thing, he said, was practical knowledge of acoustics, and he thought Krenek could pick up the fundamentals from hearing the tapes Eimert was bringing with him to Darmstadt for the summer session, which Krenek would be attending.¹⁶

Soon after receiving Eimert's letter, Krenek set off for Europe. A massive letter-writing campaign earlier in the year had lined him up enough speaking and recital engagements to enable him to stay on after the Darmstadt summer courses and pay a visit to Eimert's studio. There was a moment of dreadful panic after his arrival in Italy when his passport was stolen, but a replacement was arranged and he made his way to the Kranichsteiner Institut, where he was honored by a performance of *Dark Waters*, Blanche Thebom's singing of *Medea*, and a recital that included his Seventh String Quartet and other works. Because he was conducting a rehearsal of *Dark Waters*, he missed the uproar occasioned by a performance of Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke* (Piano pieces) I–IV, which was greeted with shouts of abuse from the conservative students. On hearing of the commotion the next day, he told the students in his composition class that they were not at the Institut to pass judgment but to learn. They should wait to hear the tape recording of the music and study the score.

Nono made the same point the following year when the students broke into laughter during a performance of *Klavierstücke* V–VIII, causing Stockhausen, who had been turning pages for the pianist, to gather up the music and leave. Nono persuaded him to return, and after Nono's rebuke to the students the recital continued. But whereas Stockhausen accepted Nono's defense, he ignored Krenek's the previous year and did not bother to answer an invitation to speak to Krenek's class about his music and methods of composing.

When the courses were over Krenek joined Eimert in his Cologne studio before setting out on a tour that took him to a number of cities, including Frankfurt, Zürich, Basel, Munich, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Linz, and Vienna. He no longer feared traveling in Austria as an American; indeed, many of his appearances on this tour were sponsored by the U.S. Information Service. During this time the first broadcast of electronic music took place on October 19, when NWDR-Cologne offered a program of works by Eimert, Stockhausen, and Pousseur. Krenek was obliged to return to Los Angeles in December, but, pleased with the interest shown him by West German and Austrian audiences and eager to work in Eimert's studio, he resolved to go back to Europe as soon as he could. He also decided to go forward with his long-pondered *Pfingstorianum* using electronic sounds. The fires of his imagination were flaring up once more.

A further encouragement toward getting involved with the new techniques and

technologies of music came in a curious way the following summer. In the old days in Vienna he had known a musician named Ernst Kalmus, the nephew of an officer of Universal Edition. Kalmus, now by profession a scientist, had come to the United States and ended up at the government's atomic research laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico, where he worked with an electron microscope on problems of radiation pollution and sickness. Learning that Krenek was living in Los Angeles, he invited Krenek for a visit to Los Alamos, which took place in July 1955. Improbable as the visit was, Krenek greatly enjoyed his time among the mathematicians and physicists. When he told them about current developments in music, they were intrigued and suggested that certain numerical problems of the new music could be handled by the computer they were building, one of the first in the nation.

Stimulated by their talk, Krenek was now impatient to get back to Cologne. By good fortune, Eimert obtained for him a one-thousand-dollar grant in return for which he was to complete an electronic work to be broadcast sometime between January and May 1956. Once at the studio, he had the best of technical assistance as he worked through the fall of 1955 and on into the next spring. He managed to complete the first part of the oratorio, *Spiritus Intelligentiae Sanctus*, op. 152, in time for it to be broadcast, along with Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* and some lesser works, on the first program of really significant rather than simply experimental electronic music, which took place in Cologne on May 30, 1956. Requests for permission to rebroadcast the program came in quickly from Frankfurt, Munich, Hannover, Vienna, Stockholm, and Paris, and whatever package was made up for other stations, the Krenek and Stockhausen works, both of which mingled sung tones with electronically produced ones and by their richness quite overshadowed the rest, were always included. Interestingly, Krenek's many weeks of work on the oratorio produced only enough music to fill one side of a ten-inch long-playing record. Krenek wanted to push on until the oratorio was complete, but to do so would have required much more time with the equipment than he had been allotted. In the end he settled for what he had, which was finished enough to stand alone.

Although he had not been in Darmstadt during the summers when serialism was a center of attention, he knew about it from talks with Eimert and acquaintances at the Institut. While serialism appealed to his analytical skills and his proclivity for schemata, he had misgivings about the restraints it placed on a composer's freedom. He had expressed these misgivings in a short article published in *Melos* in November 1954, adding that for all its elaborate organization, serial music sounded chaotic.¹⁷ He repeated this opinion shortly afterward in an essay written for the first number of *Die Reihe* (The row), a periodical devoted to electronic and serial music established by Eimert and published irregularly by Universal Edition. Krenek's contribution, "Den Jüngeren über die Schulter geschaut" (A glance over the shoulders of the young), asserted that the middle generation of twelve-tone composers (by which he clearly meant his own) had sought greater freedom, but because the younger

composers wanted to extend the degree of serial precomposition they had been forced to abandon exposition and development.

It is curious that in listening to the few pieces in the new idiom and based on the new methods, which have been performed to date, even the listener current in the ways of the twelve-tone technique had the impression that chaos, whether intentional or not, was the final result of those efforts. . . . At this point in its evolution it is impossible for the present writer to decide whether the abandonment really is essential and whether the musical content which is meant to compensate for this deficiency really comes up to the standard of what has previously been considered the minimum necessary for the awakening and retention of the listener's interest, in fact, to make the music worth one's time to hear. To the superficial observer it appears that the phenomena demonstrated so far . . . are of a considerably lower intellectual level of musical consciousness than the aspirations which were associated with the demanding music of the past.¹⁸

There were other reasons, too, for his reluctance to try his hand at a serial work. He was at work on some commissioned pieces, including *Eleven Transparencies*, op. 142, for the Louisville Orchestra, that he felt should be somewhat conventional (compared to serial music, anyway) in view of the performers and their probable audiences. And, as he told Claudia Zenck many years later, he had a "psychological threshold" to cross.¹⁹ Although he did not elaborate, the threshold probably included a reluctance—particularly after the long period of financial hardship, which was now slowly beginning to abate—to leave twelve-tone music, over which he enjoyed such mastery and which he had used for the commissions that had kept him going, for a kind of music that he himself had said sounded chaotic and would likely find few appreciators. He may also have hesitated to enter what amounted to a fiefdom whose overlords ostracized those who had followed the banner of Schönberg.

As he hung in doubt, he thought of Okeghem, who had used polyphony too complex to be comprehended by his listeners, who had resorted to proportions resembling those in serialism to determine his isorhythmic time durations, and who had been called a "pure cerebralist"—an epithet that, Krenek had remarked earlier in his booklet about Okeghem, made the modern composer feel a kinship with him. In defending Okeghem he had recounted an experience that took place during his visit to Spain in 1934. In a vast cathedral, the priest acting as his guide had pointed out a carving in the upper reaches of the vault that could be seen only with the aid of a flashlight and binoculars. It was there, the priest remarked, to please God, not man. So it was, Krenek believed, with the intricacies of Okeghem's polyphony.

The priest's account so intrigued him that he returned to it in a booklet, *De rebus prius factis* (Concerning things before deeds, 1956), adding that the church music of the fifteenth century represented the highest intellectual effort of especially gifted artists, and the results—like the architectural complexity of a late Gothic cathedral, of which it was a counterpart in sound—were worthy of being presented to the

Almighty.²⁰ Serialism offered a medium for exhibiting intellectual effort of a very high order; but was it enough, in a Godless age, that it should simply exist, with no Higher Being to appreciate its marvels?

With his knowledge of medieval music Krenek found precedents for serial music, despite its progenitors' belief that their mode of expression was wholly cut off from the past. In his oratorio he, like Okeghem, was writing spiritual music, and he was using a medium, electronic music, that Eimert claimed could be controlled only by serial techniques. He decided to use those techniques to organize the time durations of an electronic interlude in his work, basing the durations on a series derived from the tone row of the interlude. He also used a similar series to predetermine the order of the variations of the tone row.

With respect to serialism Krenek was at a point similar to that reached by Messiaen in *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités*. He had not gone all the way, but he had taken a momentous step, one that, as he knew at the time and later often affirmed, was as consequential as adopting the twelve-tone technique. It was accompanied by a fundamental change of attitude toward music, toward composing, and toward the audience. Describing the oratorio later, he said: "Whatever occurs in this piece at any given point is premeditated [i.e., predetermined] and therefore technically predictable. However, while the preparation and layout of this material as well as the operations performed therein are the consequences of serial premeditation, *the audible results of these procedures were not visualized as the purpose of the procedures. Seen from this angle the results are incidental*" (emphasis added).^{*} They are also, he added, so complex that they are only technically, not actually, predictable.²¹ The change of attitude inherent in these words was to prove as costly as it was extraordinary.

Krenek's dalliance with serialism might have ended when he returned to the United States in August 1956 after nearly a year abroad and yet another session teaching at Darmstadt, where he lectured on Beethoven's late quartets and the potentialities of electronic music. In November, however, he received another commission that, like the one from Eimert to create an electronic work, did not oblige him to hold back for the sake of the performers and the audience. This one came from Sacher, who offered him one thousand dollars for an orchestral work. Sacher was sympathetic toward experimental works and believed that audiences should be acquainted with new developments no matter how they felt about modernism; he was also fortunate in that he worked with musicians who could cope with difficult avant-garde scores. Krenek, therefore, could do as he pleased. He began working at once, placing *Kette, Kreis, und Spiegel* (Circle, Chain, and Mirror),[†] op. 160, in Sacher's hands by February 19, 1957.

In this piece he once again limited himself to predetermining the tone rows and

^{*}In discussing serial music Krenek regularly used "premeditated" where "predetermined" is the more accurate term.

[†]The German title is actually *Chain, Circle, and Mirror*, but Krenek prefers the version given here, and it appears thus in English-language comments on the work.

durations, with the title meant to suggest how he had organized them: “circle” signified that the tone rows were rotated until the first version returned; “chain” described how successive versions of the row were joined to one another; and “mirror” indicated that the row returned in retrograde. Hoping to etch the structure more sharply, and thus to enable listeners to sense its presence in the work even if they could not follow it precisely, Krenek in many passages did as Stockhausen had done in *Kontra-Punkte*, Boulez in *Le marteau sans maître*, and, many years earlier, Schönberg in *Pierrot lunaire*: he used abruptly attacked and briefly sustained single notes scattered among instruments chosen for their contrasting timbres and registers. The result was orchestral music unlike anything Krenek had ever written before: fascinating but, for listeners accustomed to the musical continuum of works such as *Symphonic Elegy* or the Second Violin Concerto, confusing in its shifts between the harsh and brusque and the sonorous and fluid. Unable to make out its structure, one was left with an impression of energetic motion (but in what direction?) and richly varied textures, by turns forbidding and agreeable.

Following its premiere on January 24, 1958, in Basel, Sacher wrote that he was pleased with the work, although he found Krenek’s “musical speech not easily accessible.”²² Little wonder, for, as Krenek later said of it, “Whatever morphological kinship may be detected between adjacent sections is the result of similarities of intervallic shapes that may occur in neighboring forms of the tone-row, the vicinity of which, however, is a consequence of premeditated serial arrangement . . . and [is] not dictated by requirements of a so-called musical nature.”²³ In “On the Enjoyment of Music,” his inaugural lecture at Hamline, he had told his audience that they could learn to enjoy contemporary music by listening to the musical process of new works. “You discover the connecting lines, you begin to realize that things happen according to plan and with necessity; in other words, you experience the logic of the process, and that is where your enjoyment begins.” For Sacher he had written a fairly technical account of how the tone row was rotated and mirrored, how the time magnitudes were derived from it, and how he had followed precedents in the isorhythmic canons of the music of the fourteenth century. Excerpts of this account were published in a Basel newspaper a few days before the premiere and in the program notes, and reviewers seized on this material in attempting to describe music so strange to local ears. Sacher thought this was better than having them write nonsense, yet it is doubtful that they or many in the audience perceived the “similarities of intervallic shapes” sufficiently to “experience the logic of the process.” Probably at most it could be hoped that they would be persuaded by Krenek’s account that a logic was indeed present.

Krenek was finally brought all the way into serialism during six weeks that he spent at Princeton University in the spring of 1957. On successive Thursday evenings beginning on April 18 he lectured on the topic “Recent Advances in Musical Thought and Sound” to an audience of twenty-five invited guests, who included

famed physicist Robert Oppenheimer. His talks, for which he received an honorarium of five thousand dollars, were part of the annual Christian Gauss Seminars in Criticism, under the direction of R. P. Blackmur, an influential poet and literary critic. To be asked to participate was a great distinction, which Roger Sessions, who had rejoined the Princeton faculty in 1953, helped to obtain for his old friend. Ordinarily the lecturers were chosen from the ranks of literature and philosophy; Krenek's predecessors included Kenneth Burke, Edmund Wilson, and Jacques Maritain.

After the talks Krenek, Blackmur, and a few others would repair to Blackmur's home for drinks and conversation, and it was during one of these gatherings that Blackmur told him about a medieval poetic form called the sestina, the invention of which was attributed to Arnaut Daniel. It consisted of six stanzas of six lines each and ended with a tornada of three lines that summed up the poem. In all six stanzas the same six words, which might or might not rhyme, were used at the ends of the lines; they then reappeared in a different way in the tornada. To avoid monotony and to give the poet a greater range of expression within the limitations thus imposed, the order of these end-words was rotated according to a predetermined pattern. The parallel with serialism was striking, and, mulling over what Blackmur had told him, Krenek decided to write a wholly predetermined vocal work for which he would provide his own text in the form of a sestina. What is more, he would organize his musical series and rotate them in accordance with the system used to rotate the end-words of his poem. Finally, he would exert himself to make this a true monument of absolute serialism.²⁴

He could undertake this formidable task because Paul Fromm, a wine importer of German birth who had emigrated to the United States in 1938 and settled in Chicago, had recently offered him five hundred dollars to compose a work for a concert of new music that Fromm planned to put on in New York. They had met in the spring of 1955, a year after Fromm had established a foundation for the support of contemporary music. The following October Fromm wrote to Krenek offering him a foundation grant to write an opera suited to small professional companies, college groups, and television. Krenek suggested a libretto based on Melville's short story "The Bell Tower," which Fromm approved. The opera was to be ready for a first performance by the Opera Workshop at the University of Illinois in Urbana in the spring of 1957, during the university's biennial Festival of the Contemporary Arts.

Krenek began work on the libretto in November, and on the score one month later while still engaged with *Spiritus Intelligentiae Sanctus* at Eimert's studio in Cologne. He completed the one-act, three-scene opera there on April 14, 1956. Even though it was a twelve-tone work, *The Bell Tower*, op. 153, was well received at its premiere on March 17, 1957, for the festival audience was fairly receptive to music of this kind. A recording, paid for by Fromm, was issued, and a German

production in translation followed in December 1958 at Duisburg, with Krenek conducting. Fromm was so pleased with the opera and its reception that he made the offer that enabled Krenek to create *Sestina*, op. 161—which, appropriately enough, Krenek dedicated “in friendship” to Fromm.

He began work on *Sestina* in the summer of 1957 just as the originators of serialism were repudiating that technique. They had found that total predetermination was impossible, even when working with electronic means that enabled a composer to control the material down to hundredths of a second. There was always something that could not be fitted into the set design. More important, their experience had convinced them that the limitations on the composer were intolerable. (Recall that Krenek, too, had been put off by these limitations.) At first they kept quiet about the amount of conventionally intuitive composing present in their works in order to emphasize the uniqueness of their procedures, and they continued to be peremptorily dogmatic in their pronunciamientos even as they allowed unpredicted elements to creep in.

Structures Ib (1952) was Boulez’s last attempt at total serialism; by 1954 he was saying openly that he and his associates were foolish in striving for it, pointing out that despite their claims, opportunities for the exercise of free choice still obtained within predetermined structures, which he now took to be a good thing. In 1955, when composing *Le marteau sans maître*, his best-known work (admirers term it one of the three benchmarks of twentieth-century music, the others being *Pierrot lunaire* and *The Rite of Spring*), he made departures into free composition. Stockhausen, composing *Gruppen* between 1955 and 1957, made similar departures to avoid tedium and to exploit the opportunities provided by his scoring the work for three orchestras.

Finally, in “Aléa,” a talk delivered at the Darmstadt summer courses in 1957, when Krenek was absent, Boulez announced in his usual manner of brooking no dispute that serialism was a subtle and poisonous form of autointoxication: “schematization, quite simply, takes the place of invention; imagination—an auxiliary—limits itself to giving birth to a complex mechanism which takes care of engendering microscopic and macroscopic structures until, in the absence of any further combinations, the piece comes to an end. . . . [Serialism is] a fetishism of numbers, leading to pure and simple failure.”²⁵ He also condemned aleatory, or chance, music, though without naming John Cage, whose work was beginning to attract a following at the Institut. The way of the future, he said, using a phrase that would be repeated many times, was “directed chance.” “I believe that one can first *absorb* chance by establishing a certain automatism of relationship among various networks of probabilities drawn up beforehand. . . . I naturally expect that this automatism shall not take in all creative thought, but that it may play a role in such thought.”²⁶

“Directed chance” was nothing new. Boulez’s remarks applied as well to a symphony by Haydn, or a landscape by Constable, or a sonnet by Petrarch—all works

that began with some degree of predeterminism, some given conditions, and contain details discovered during their making. But such a *volte-face*, emphasized by Boulez's truculent style, created a sensation at Darmstadt. It was reinforced when Nono, in charge of a composition course with Stockhausen and Pousseur, told the students that feelings, self-expression, and commitment should be brought back into composing. Finally, György Ligeti, who had undertaken at Stockhausen's suggestion an analysis of Boulez's *Structures Ia*, demonstrated that even in that supposedly purely serial work, Boulez had frequently resorted to free invention. When it was published in the 1958 *Die Reihe*, this analysis was recognized as a remarkable exercise and at once had wide influence among the composers and critics who had been following developments at the Kranichsteiner Institut. Ligeti urged that the rules be relaxed and the composer's responsibilities enlarged, though he advised against abandoning serialism entirely because it was a guarantee against the banality of outworn forms.

By coincidence, Krenek decided to devote the text of *Sestina* to the relation of chance and determinism, the very theme of Boulez's talk. He did not approach this relation as a problem in musical aesthetics; rather, it was simply "an interesting aspect of life: we are torn between two poles." The artist should not try to explain the dialectic interplay of chance and determinism; the point was to use it as material, as he himself was doing.²⁷ Realizing that in *Sestina* the end-words would, by virtue of their prominent position and constant reiteration, inevitably become the key words of the poem, Krenek selected after much trial and error the following:

Strom (stream), signifying the flow of life, of history, of God's mysterious grace, and the succession of sounds in a sestina.

Mass (measure), representing proportion, ratio, mathematical formulas, and number series such as those of Pythagoras, Fibonacci, and Fourier.

Zufall (chance), the contingent, the unforeseeable, even the flux and blur of the flow of life, the *Strom*.

Gestalt (shape), meaning the shape of the poem itself and the music, which according to the followers of Pythagoras could represent by analogy the shape of the universe.

Zeit (time), in this instance signifying both the direction and the divisions of the flow of life.

Zahl (number), referring to dimensions (as distinct from *Mass*, which stood for *relations* among the dimensions) of such things as musical intervals, units of time, degrees of density, and distances in space.

Daniel and the troubadours who used sestinas employed a simple mode of rotation for the end-words: the word ending the sixth line of the first stanza was used to

end the first line of the second stanza, thereby producing the following series of endings: A-B-C-D-E-F, F-A-B-C-D-E, E-F-A-B-C-D, and so forth. But since Krenck had decided to rotate his tone rows according to the method of rotation applied to the end-words, this simple method would not work because the tones would remain in the same order and he would not have the variations he needed. He therefore devised a method of rotation that produced the following series: A-B-C-D-E-F, F-A-E-B-D-C, C-F-D-A-B-E, and so forth. (A seventh stanza, if there had been one, would have had the same ending pattern as the first.) In the three-line *tornada* the end-word pattern was E-C-A; the other three key words were used in the successive lines in the order B-D-F. This, too, was predetermined. Applying this system of rotation to the first three stanzas, for example, produced the following series of end-words: *Strom-Mass-Zufall-Gestalt-Zeit-Zahl*; *Zahl-Strom-Zeit-Mass-Gestalt-Zufall*; *Zufall-Zahl-Gestalt-Strom-Mass-Zeit*.

The rotation of words as abstract as these made it difficult, though not impossible, to run over from an end-word into the next line, because that line had to be set up for *its* end-word. Consequently, most lines came out as terse sentences, or at least independent clauses, that amounted to statements—virtually dicta—entire and sufficient in themselves. The suggestive ambiguity, the scope, and the ontological connotations of such language tended to make the text gnomic and incantatory, just avoiding sententiousness and a kind of pseudo-scientific mystification. At the same time, rotation of these words established a series of perspectives from which to consider the theme:

Vergangen Klang und Klage, sanfter Strom.
Die Schwingung der Sekunde wird zum Mass.
Was in Geschichte lebt, war's nur ein Zufall?
Verfall, Verhall, zerronnene Gestalt?
Die Stunde zeitigt Wandel, wendet Zeit.
Das Vorgeschrítte ordnet sich der Zahl.

Bygone are sound and mourning, tender stream.
Vibration of the second becomes the measure.
What lives in history, was it only chance?
Decline, fading sound, vanished shape?
The hour causes change, turns the time.
What looks ahead subordinates itself to number.*

We think in numbers to give shape to life, but it escapes and the unpredictable appears.

The wheel of the world is turned by riddlesome chance.

*This and other passages from *Sestina* presented in English were translated by Krenck. The full German text and his translation are given in Appendix A.

However,

The unmeasured stands in need of number,
in the unnumbered we miss measure.

But

Eternity employs no number.
.....

What falls to us from above comes by chance,
falling from Grace's eternally unmeasured stream.

The tornada summarized the poem thus:

As I with measure master sound and time,
shape recedes in unmeasured chance.
The crystal of number releases life's stream.

If one takes note of all the meanings invested in the key words in the preceding stanzas, then the tornada can be roughly paraphrased thus: Rigid formulaic structures that seem to lock all events into a predictable pattern (serialism in music, Newtonian physics, clocks and calendars, theories of history) actually make us aware of the true nature of being, a turbulent flow of indeterminate vitality.

The poem has the appearance of ratiocination, but in fact it is a succession of hermetic utterances, some of them very obscure, which circle about the paradox summarized in the tornada. Certain maxims that turn up during the circling suggest that Krenek did not have a series of carefully worked out and precisely coordinated ideas to which he wished to give poetic shape, but rather that the exigencies of the complicated form he was using actually discovered ideas for him. If this is true, then it validated his thesis that the predetermined—here, the fixed end-words and the rotation system—leads to chance, or “the crystal of number releases life's stream.” The poet John Crowe Ransom used to insist that some of the most profound ideas in poetry were discovered during the search for words to fit a rhyme scheme or a metrical pattern, and that these unforeseen, perhaps hitherto unknown, ideas constituted one of the glories of literature and sources of poetic truth. Something of the sort seems to have occurred in the making of *Sestina*.

For the music Krenek devised a twelve-tone row, which he divided into two six-tone rows (Ex. 13a). He then rotated the tones within each six-tone group according to the system he had used when rotating the six end-words. The first rotation produced the row shown in Ex. 13b. He also used inversion, retrogression, and retrograde inversion to generate further variants and so distributed the tones that none could be associated with a particular word. To predetermine such things as the durations of tones, the density of the score at any given moment, the positions of

ered manifestations of chance. At about this time he came upon an essay by Carl Bricken, a friend from his Wisconsin days, who maintained that the startling elements in Beethoven's works provide a unique pleasure when the listener realizes their necessity within the framework adopted by the composer. Here, Krenek saw, was an explanation of what had appealed to him in Schubert's songs. He pounced on it, for it could be used to account for the appeal serialism had for him and, he hoped, others. Beginning in 1955 with his essay "Sinn und Unsinn der modernen Musik" (Sense and nonsense in modern music), he used this explanation repeatedly in essays, lectures, and program notes to defend serialism and his own works.

He thought he had found support in an unexpected quarter when in 1958 Eimert reprinted in *Die Reihe* a 1952 essay by Boulez, who remarked: "There is no creation except in the unforeseeable becoming necessary [Il n'y a de création que dans l'imprévisible devenant nécessité]." By this time, though, Boulez was saying in "Aléa" that such chance was the shameful result of a composer's refusal to exercise choice, which is "slurred over with a lack of virtuosity that is painful to behold. . . . I am unable to make out the precise reason for this fear to approach the true problem of composition. Perhaps this phenomenon . . . is due to a kind of fetishism of numerical procedures. . . . The obsession with what *may* happen takes the place of what *should* happen."³⁰

Although "fetishism" is too strong a term for Krenek's insistence on the value of the unexpected that bobbed up during the operation of necessity, he attached such importance to the unforeseen that for him it became virtually axiomatic that necessity leads to chance and that chance is surprising and therefore pleasing—two qualities that imbue a work with musical merit. This axiom, however, if such it can be called, rested on shaky ground, for if serialism were truly total (and, as has been shown, it could not be), then there could be nothing random—nothing resulting from "unmeasured chance," to quote from *Sestina*—regardless of how one manipulates the accepted definitions of these terms. In later years, when he had been put on the defensive, Krenek apparently thought he could buttress his argument with big names from science. "The composer dreams," he wrote in 1964,

that the image of the universe as outlined in the concepts of Einstein's relativity, Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy, Planck's quantum theory or Schrodinger's wave equations is somehow reflected and sublimated in his complex serial manipulation of musical atoms, although they do not require much beyond junior-college mathematics. . . . Just as modern science seems to approach areas where the hard and fast relationships of old are transfigured into patterns having unforeseen properties, music organized under the influence of such thought processes moves on to new imaginative potentialities which might not have been visualized without the experience of scientific influence.³¹

This statement is interesting for what it reveals about Krenek's attitudes toward serialism, numbers, and science, but as a gloss on *Sestina* and Krenek's serial works

to follow it is of little use. It brings to mind the naive and pretentious claims that Krenek made in *Über neue Musik* to the effect that the twelve-tone technique resembled non-Euclidean geometry and that retrogression abolished time much as the concept of the fourth dimension does. As for *Sestina* and the other works, they would stand or fall on their merits, regardless of such borrowed finery.

Sestina is an imposing, even extravagant, display of ingenuity. By itself the text is a provocative, if static, series of ruminations that reach widely but do not strike deeply. Their ambiguities, even their obscurities, are the consequence not of ineptitude but rather of Krenek's refusal to compromise the central paradox summarized in the tornada. From his circling about that paradox he obtains a number of curious intimations that bind the poem into an intriguing but undeniably puzzling whole. Yet in the end the text proves more a diverting oddity than an instructive ontological statement.

The music, however, is quite another matter. Because serialism makes musical themes impossible (in all of *Sestina*, only one phrase is repeated), the parts of a serial work are joined in a network of similarities and contrasts. If a listener cannot sense, let alone actually perceive, any organizing principle that gives even a hint of direction, of a rationale or substantive relationship among the elements (never mind how tightly woven the network may appear to be in the composer's schematic diagrams), then all becomes a dismaying reduction of the music to clangorous debris. Without some impression of formal order there can be no expectations, and the listener is denied even the modest pleasure of encounters with the unexpected, of which Krenek made so much. To put it another way, where everything is unexpected, nothing is.

Because Krenek attached such importance to his text and gave primacy to the words and the vocal line—this alone being a departure from absolute serialism—the success of *Sestina* depends greatly on the singer, who must understand the text (which, despite the obscurities, is intelligible in a general way) and must feel its phrases and subtle nuances and emphases, its contemplative circularity. If the singer does not have such a grasp of the text, then the vocal part crumbles into discrete particles. But when the grasp is there and the singer wants to communicate the meaning of the text, then the vocal part not only takes on its own proper coherence and unity but also imparts these qualities to the work as a whole. Rightly projected, the words give the listener a sense of order, purpose, and direction, which the music serves; thus the music ceases to be felt as random and bewildering and can be heard with understanding and appreciation.

The premiere of *Sestina* took place at the New School for Social Research in New York City on March 9, 1958, with Krenek conducting. The violinist Alexander Schneider had assembled a group of expert instrumentalists, and Bethany Beardsley, who was known for her skill with difficult contemporary music, had been engaged for the vocal part (another singer had withdrawn, saying the part was beyond her

capacity). The concert, which included a performance of excerpts from *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* by the Schola Cantorum of New York directed by Hugh Ross, was politely received, and the next day *Sestina* was recorded by Columbia Records. With assistance from Fromm, five hundred copies of the recording (which also included the *Lamentatio* excerpts, performed by the choir of the State School for Church Music at Dresden, whose earlier rendering was more to Krenek's liking) were issued under Columbia's Epic label. Nevertheless, despite an unusually favorable review by Alfred Frankenstein in *High Fidelity*, in which he called *Sestina* "a superlatively beautiful piece of music . . . [that] may very well prove to be one of the most important works of modern times," few copies were sold, and the recording disappeared.³² More than two decades later the recording was rereleased (without the *Lamentatio* excerpts) under the Orion label, but again sales were disappointing.

The recording is poorly balanced, with Beardsley's voice intermittently covered by the instruments so that the continuity is broken. Moreover, she adheres so strictly to the pointillistic style of the work that the words come out as successions of single syllables rather than in meaningful phrases, and she has a number of mannerisms that muddy the sense of the text. Thus the vocal part, on which so much of the unity and effectiveness of the whole depends, does not adequately sustain the work.

Yet this need not be the case. In 1979 and again in 1980 at Krenek festivals in Santa Barbara, California, and Graz, Constance Navratil sang with intensity and lyricism, interpreting the texts with intelligence and—remarkably—even passion, to which the audiences responded enthusiastically. Her very personal reading of the work (she held on to syllables a little longer than the score directed, allowing whole sentences to come through as such) was far removed from the severe objectivity attributed to serial works. She was, in fact, in accord with Nono's behest that feelings, self-expression, and commitment be restored to music. On such occasions as these, *Sestina* proved to be the monument that Krenek had intended.

The work is not without faults. For one thing, it is too long: a listener thus has difficulty maintaining the concentration required to experience the work as a whole, in that the text seems to say much the same thing in seven different ways, if one counts the tornada. Also, one's attention tends to drop during the instrumental interlude that precedes the tornada, giving the impression that the work is coming apart. Only with a singer of the utmost intelligence and musicality does *Sestina* succeed, and then it is truly magnificent: a daring, exciting, imperfect masterpiece with a unique place among those of Krenek's compositions that bear the mark of genius.

. . .

As Krenek was exploring electronic music and serialism, his fortunes were improving, particularly after the long sojourn in Europe that began in the fall of 1955

with the premiere of *Pallas Athene weint* at the Hamburg State Opera. By this time almost all of his income, commissions from Fromm aside, came from Europe—much of it from royalties and conducting fees when his music was broadcast in West Germany and Austria. In 1956, as a consequence of a brilliant performance of excerpts from *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* in Düsseldorf by the choir of the Dresden church music school, he entered into an agreement with Bärenreiter Verlag of Kassel to publish that and subsequent works. Although Bärenreiter, a firm specializing in church music, was clearly appropriate for *Lamentatio*, its director, Wolfgang Timaeus, was ready to push Krenek's serial and other recent work just as hard. Universal Edition, which could now pay royalties to him directly, seemed to Krenek to give his music too little attention, especially in comparison with that lavished on the works of the Darmstadt-Cologne clique; Timaeus, however, was unswervingly loyal—even when Krenek went over his head and negotiated directly with performers, which dismayed and annoyed him, for he thought Krenek settled for less than was his due.

In view of the great interest in his music abroad, especially in West Germany, and with such friends as Sacher, Gubler, Eimert, and now Timaeus pressing his cause, it is surprising that Krenek did not return to Europe to live. On May 14, 1955, he was awarded the City of Vienna Prize of ten thousand schillings. As he could not be present, his mother accepted the prize on his behalf and was greatly pleased by the remarks of the mayor and other officials regarding her son and the attention they paid her.

Although no such honors had come to him, or were likely soon to come, in America, nevertheless, in the fall of 1956 he and Gladys purchased a small house in Tujunga, a rustic suburb northeast of Los Angeles. They were so pleased with their new home that they had three hundred cards with a picture of it printed for Christmas, and 1957 began with congratulations coming in from friends who but a short time before had been hurrying to their rescue. Krenek simply preferred the blue skies of California to the wintry overcast of Central Europe, and he expressed his love of the Southwest in superb watercolors of scenes from the Anza-Borrego Desert, the Mohave Desert, and Death Valley.

He had taken up the medium in 1954, and, despite having had no training in drawing or painting since his *Gymnasium* days, when he did the excellent sketches for his Athburg manuscript, he was soon quite proficient. Indeed, some years later, when one of his Death Valley studies was being framed by a craftsman accustomed to working on pictures by artists of rank, this person was astonished that Krenek was not himself a professional painter. The powers of observation, the "painter's eye," that had served him so well as an essayist now were the basis of hours of pleasure and relaxation.

The upward progress of his fortunes reached a peak in 1960, though this milestone year passed almost without notice in the United States. In February he learned

that he had been elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters (not to be confused with the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Letters or the even more prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences), and in April he was invited to play some of his piano works at a "Monday Evening Concert" in Los Angeles.* But that was all. (Not that modern music was being overlooked in America during that significant year: La Monte Young's *Poem for Table, Chairs, and Benches* was premiered in Berkeley, for instance, and Cage's *Music for Amplified Toy Pianos* was premiered in New York.)

Stravinsky, who attended the Monday evening performance, wrote a gracious note expressing his admiration. The two composers had renewed acquaintance in Los Angeles, and in the late fifties this had become a cordial friendship. As Robert Craft wrote to Fromm, "Mr. Stravinsky went out to Krenek's for dinner, and I am happy to say that those two composers got on very well. Stravinsky is really very fond of Krenek, respects him enormously, and is really glad to hear the kind of things that everybody can learn from Krenek. Krenek also could not have been nicer."³³ The "things" they discussed included the twelve-tone technique and serialism, which, on Craft's urging, Stravinsky had been studying. When the two composers dined that spring of 1958, Stravinsky had recently completed *Threni*, his first entirely twelve-tone work, and would soon begin another, *Movements for Piano and Orchestra*, while Krenek had recently been in New York conducting *Sestina* and would soon complete two more serial works, *Hexahedron*, op. 167, for chamber ensemble, and *Sechs Vermessene* (Six measurements), op. 168, for piano. Stravinsky's note, coming amid the neglect attending Krenek's sixtieth year from one whom Krenek admired and who he knew understood what he was trying to accomplish, gave great pleasure.

Krenek was neglected as well by the organizers of the 1960 ISCM festival, which was held in Cologne and featured music by Schönberg, Berg, and Webern, as well as the usual swatch of works by the Darmstadt-Cologne sodality. He fared better in Austria. With the arrival of full nationhood and a measure of prosperity, the national leaders were looking for ways to refurbish Austria's image as a land of high culture, particularly in music. At the same time, coming into positions of power in the nation's opera houses and concert halls, and at the radio and television center in Vienna, were younger people who appreciated the international importance of the Second Viennese School and were more cordially disposed toward new music than their predecessors, and who were also beginning to realize that among living composers Krenek was certainly the most notable native Austrian. In 1960 he was represented at the Vienna Festival by minor works, which his mother reported were

*Originally called "Evenings on the Roof" (of the Wilshire-Ebell Theater in Los Angeles), this concert series was established in the late forties for the presentation of contemporary music. Following a change of name, concerts have been presented at a variety of sites in the city and over the years have occasionally provided an outlet for pieces by Krenek that do not require many performers.

well performed; but the important honors began shortly after his birthday, when he was presented with the Silver Medal of Austria for services to the republic. In October he received Vienna's highest award, the city's Gold Medal. In November the Viennese finally heard *Karl V* at first hand when Krenek conducted a concert version (the Vienna Opera being unwilling to undertake a full production), which was sponsored and broadcast by the government radio station.

All these honors and Krenek's induction into the Berlin Academy of Arts that year had to be fit into a schedule that included more than forty appearances as lecturer, pianist, and conductor, beginning in mid-August and lasting into the following March, with a few days out for Christmas with his mother, who was now eighty years old. Many of these recitals, often accompanied by a short talk, were put on at America Houses maintained by the U.S. Information Service in cities such as Frankfurt, Bremen, Kassel, Berlin, and Munich. Most often the music consisted of *Reisebuch*, sung by Rudo Timper with Krenek as accompanist.

Timper, a doctor with a good voice and a passion for music, had written to Krenek in 1957 to say that his teacher had interested him in modern music, of which *Reisebuch* had become his favorite work. Now he had been asked to record the cycle for Telefunken-Decca. Would Krenek accompany him? Krenek agreed (though the record was issued under another label, Rhodos), and this led to the tour of 1960, for which the indefatigable Timper made most of the arrangements. For variety they added *Ballad of the Railroads* and some Schubert lieder, and they were so pleased by the tour's success that Timper subsequently arranged similar, though less strenuous, tours in 1961 and 1965.

In 1960, Krenek visited Irene Erdmann, whose husband had died of a heart attack early in the summer of 1958. Grieving and in poor health, she had not written for some time. Then early in 1960 she wrote Krenek praising his essay collection *Gedanken unterwegs*, which she admired, she said, for its terseness, poetic qualities, wit, and wisdom. His visit meant a great deal to her, for of all those who wrote to her when her husband died, Krenek seemed best to understand him and his words were the most consoling.

Yet curiously, Krenek did not manage to do or say anything when faithful Mitropoulos died of a heart attack at the La Scala Opera House in Milan on November 2, 1960. Emy Rubensohn, who had expected at least to read an appreciation of Mitropoulos such as Krenek had written when Erdmann died, was shocked by his silence and wrote to rebuke him and urge that he send condolences to Mitropoulos's loyal assistant, Trudy Goth. She even thought up excuses that he might use to explain his tardiness. But Krenek, busy with rehearsals for the *Karl V* concert, did nothing.

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The triumphal 1960–1961 season ended on March 26 with Krenek conducting the opening night of a production of *Leben des Orest* at the Landestheater in Darm-

stadt, after which he returned to Tujunga. The production was such a success with the audience and critics that Steinecke urged the management to revive it while the 1961 summer courses were in progress at the Kranichsteiner Institute. The director agreed, and the revival opened the night before classes began, only to be greeted by the students with continuous laughter, hoots of derision, and foot stomping. When the director, G. F. Hering, wrote an open letter, published in the *Darmstädter Echo*, deploring this hooliganism, Boulez, who was on the faculty that summer, drafted a letter, published a week later in the same paper, defending the students' conduct as a necessary protective measure against "cheap propaganda" and efforts to brainwash or even coerce them into paying their respects to outdated music and composers. In his best polemical manner he spoke of the "terror" (Hering's letter?) inflicted on them. All twelve faculty members, which included Stockhausen, Ligeti, Maderna, and Messiaen, signed this ineffably fatuous and contemptible farrago. Their names appeared in alphabetical order: the first was that of Adorno.

Resembling in spirit and manner the diatribes against *Jonny spielt auf* and *Karl V* of Nazi trucklers such as Rinaldini, Boulez's letter was aimed more at Steinecke than at Krenk, who was not named—though there could be no doubt that he was included among the "outmoded." Krenk did not learn about the commotion for several days, and he waited a few weeks before sending the *Darmstädter Tagblatt* a letter in which he reminded the signers that he had once defended Stockhausen against similar student intolerance. Though the tone of his letter was one of amused forbearance, events would show that he was deeply hurt by the clique's rejection and the astonishing participation of Adorno, who compounded matters with a talk delivered at the Institut a few days later (subsequently published in its annual collection) in which he rebuked older composers who imposed themselves in a "pestiferous way" in order to avoid being consigned to the scrap heap. Their efforts, he said, were treated with proper contempt. They should stick to the music that had earned them their reputations and not seek to contribute to new movements. Again, there could be no doubt that Krenk was among the scorned. In fact, it would have been difficult to find any other older composer who had kept up with new developments as had Krenk, thus making himself vulnerable to such shabby treatment.³⁴

Ill feeling had been building for a long time. Krenk had indeed been cordial toward the younger men, but he had also been patronizing. Writing in *Musical America* about the performance of *Polyphonie X* at the Donaueschingen Festival in 1951, he said: "Boulez used the twelve-tone technique in a way that, upon brief inspection of the score, reminded me of suggestions for further development of the [twelve-tone] technique that I published in the early 1940's. . . . It is entirely appropriate to recognize and welcome Boulez as a young composer of boldness, vision, and possibly genius. It does not detract anything if one observes at the same time that his ideas are not exactly unheard of." Considering how much Boulez and his associates crowed about their break with the past and how Boulez felt about the

middle generation of twelve-tone composers, these remarks, which were bound to get back to him, would be galling.

Nor did the defense to which Krenek referred in his letter to the *Darmstädter Tagblatt* sit well with Stockhausen. He and Krenek had gotten along well enough when Krenek worked at the Cologne studio, where Stockhausen was Eimert's officially designated assistant. But there were delays in issuing the recording of *Spiritus Intelligentiae Sanctus*, and Krenek's displeasure over this was greatly increased when he was denied time for further work on the oratorio, whereas Stockhausen and his friends, who had received grants much like Krenek's of the previous year, were able to get on with their projects. Ill feelings were aggravated when he received word from Cologne that, although the "young *Elektroniker*" (Stockhausen) had little taste for *Spiritus*, Eimert was scheduling it anyway for a jubilee in Stuttgart and broadcasts from Paris, Heidelberg, Saarbrücken, and Stockholm.³⁵

Krenek retorted that this news gave him only partial comfort when he was being, as he put it, thrust out of the electronic program. He felt that he had been used, as an "arrived" composer, to give the electronic program respectability and now, having served that purpose, was being shoved aside. As for the delays with the record, "Please give me one good reason why I should not conclude that a well-planned sabotage is in effect, inaugurated by the 'young' men who do not like my piece."³⁶

Eimert replied patiently, explaining the delays, which were not due to anyone at the studio, and assuring Krenek that no plot existed: there simply was not enough money to give Krenek the time with the equipment that he asked for.³⁷ He continued to seek programming for Krenek's music, but he was under constant pressure from Stockhausen, and his effectiveness was diminished by his approaching retirement. (Stockhausen succeeded him as full director in 1962.)

In any case, despite Eimert's assurances, Krenek *was* being excluded, not simply from the studio but also, as Rudolf Kolisch perceived, in many places where organizers of broadcasts, concerts, and festivals wanted to please and attract the much-talked-about younger crowd. "The strangest fellow is Stockhausen," Kolisch wrote to Krenek in the spring of 1958; "I can't help admiring his brains but am somewhat alarmed at his fanaticism and repulsed by his authoritarian attitudes. . . . [He] issues decrees and condemns everybody who does not follow them. . . . Don't let yourself be bullied by this crossing between a prophet and a lausub [young rascal]."³⁸

The generation gap widened still further the following summer when Krenek gave ten lectures at the Darmstadt courses on the potentials of serialism—just one year after Boulez's lecture condemning it and precisely when Nono was proclaiming that it was time to restore feeling to its proper place in composition. Krenek's lectures must have seemed to be a deliberate defiance of the party line. Then in 1960 he turned from patronizing to ridiculing the partisans. Taking time out from his crowded recital tour, he read on October 7 at Kassel a paper entitled "Komponist und Hörer" (Composer and listener), in which he described serialism, its precedents

in medieval music, and the “necessity” of the unforeseen. He scoffed at the use of scientific terms in discussions of serialism, a practice that Stockhausen had carried to an extreme when writing in *Die Reihe*:

If one studies such cryptic utterances long enough, one often sees that what is there could have been stated in simpler words because the contents are often surprisingly elementary. One can become annoyed that scientific terms are used imprecisely, unnecessarily, and dilettantishly. One can also laugh at such a way of writing and dismiss it as childish pleasure in secretiveness. . . . [For] the relation of music and science is only an analogy of perceptual modes. The mathematical procedures of serial music are of actually classical simplicity and could easily be mastered in any secondary school.³⁹

Since this talk was given as part of Kassel’s annual music festival, it enjoyed a prominence which ensured that reports of it would reach and irritate the contentious avant-gardists. Thus, and in view of their by now notorious high-handedness and generally rude behavior, their part in the uproar over *Leben des Orest* is not surprising. But Adorno’s is.

Although Adorno had been a fixture at the summer courses for a decade, he and Krenek had had little contact. He spent his time with the clique, which accepted him despite his age (he was only three years younger than Krenek) and his writings extolling Schönberg—perhaps, as Krenek later maintained, because he had ceased to compose and so constituted no threat to them. As a sociologist with a particular interest in the way economic and political forces determined the character of modern music, he followed all new developments. Critical at first of serial music, he was even more so of aleatory music when it appeared at Darmstadt, which led the young musicologist Heinz-Klaus Metzger to question his acquaintance with recent works: “His thoughts are logical enough, but have no bearing on the music under discussion; his suppositions can only be the result of ignorance.”⁴⁰ But as Stockhausen and Boulez—his dicta in “Aléa” about giving up choice now seemingly forgotten—began to introduce large quantities of chance into their scores (but not enough to impress Cage, who told the Institut students in 1958 that Stockhausen’s music was timid and boring), Adorno accepted uncertainty more and more. Finally, in his talk “Vers une musique informelle” (Toward an informal music), he envisioned a music entirely without rules and offered a contorted rationale for the experiments of the clique.

But his eagerness to be accepted scarcely accounts for his conduct toward his old friend, whose music he had so long admired and defended, and Krenek was bewildered by it. Later Krenek permitted himself a mild revenge in the open letter he contributed to a festschrift published in 1963 in honor of Adorno’s sixtieth birthday, wherein he twitted Adorno for his “brilliant pirouettes,” adding that if Adorno had not given up composing, he, too, might have been consigned to the scrap heap.

"In comparison with that [ignominious fate], your compositional abstemiousness has secured sufficient authority for your theoretical utterances to obtain for you a lasting place among the Kranichsteiner partygoers, whose 'merited' mockery I seem to have incurred by my progressive experiments."⁴¹ For all its heavy irony, Adorno took the letter in good grace and sent an amiable reply saying that they should endeavor to meet. But their friendship was over, and they never did meet again. For a time thereafter Adorno, a lifelong Marxist of a peculiarly academic kind, was, to his surprise and frequent discomfiture, taken up by the extreme left among German university students. But when he refused to condone violence or the disruption of classes, they turned on him. Their vituperations and gross behavior toward him hastened his death from heart trouble on August 6, 1969.

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The honors of 1960 gave Krenek much pleasure, but they were partly illusory: though he was feted for the stature he presently enjoyed in Austria and Germany, it was mainly the music of his past that celebrants admired him for. For as the tumult over *Leben des Orest* showed vividly, if crudely, his position in the world of music was equivocal. Despite the support of Sacher, Eimert, and Fromm and Timaeus's efforts to have his works performed, audiences were cool toward his serial works, and young experimentalists thought them out of date.

In 1959 he lectured on serialism at the Princeton Seminars in Advanced Musical Studies, which Sessions, with backing from Fromm, had recently inaugurated. His audience, comprising twenty-five young theorists and composers eager to hear about the newest developments, thought him behind the times as well and made fun behind his back of what they called his mystical attitude toward numbers. Will Ogdon, who attended the second session in 1960, found to his dismay that here, as at Darmstadt and Cologne, Krenek was resented as an older composer intruding on the realm of the young.⁴² Despite all the attention paid him in his sixtieth year, he was still, as he had been for so long, essentially an outsider.

But for the moment the full measure of his isolation was not apparent. His music, especially the older works such as *Reisebuch* and *Orest*, and his public appearances brought him a modest but steady income, and soon a mighty opportunity came to him. Hamburg, which had suffered terrible bombing during the war, was planning a vast new opera house, with an immense stage equipped with every new feature of theater technology. Rolf Liebermann, the company director, wanted for the opening a really daring new work that would be appropriate to the ambience of the house and would show off the wonders of its new stage. On December 1, 1961, he wrote to Krenek asking if he had any new work for the stage. He did not, but he told Liebermann that he would be glad to prepare one, whereupon he was given a commission.

He began work on the libretto in the autumn of 1962 and the music on January

1, 1963, completing the whole in precisely five months. The four-act opera, entitled *Der goldene Bock* (The golden ram), op. 186, is a huge surrealist treatment of the legend of Jason and the fleece, set to music that is strictly serial in places and intermittently employs electronic sounds and voice distortions. The meticulously staged premiere took place on June 14, 1964, but was received with some hostility by an audience that wanted a familiar and well-liked opera to celebrate this happy occasion. The young avant-gardists, in town for an international conference, were annoyed by the choice of a composer they associated with the past to create a work for a building that was supposed to look to the future.⁴³ Additional performances were dropped because attendance fell off, and Liebermann, who had hoped to stage the work in New York, had to discard the idea as too expensive. Though Timaeus tried diligently to place it elsewhere, he met with no success.

However, there were compensations for this setback. In Minneapolis the Walker Art Museum, the University of Minnesota, Hamline University, and Macalester College joined in staging a Krenek festival in the spring of 1965, at which Krenek conducted *Sestina*. That year he served as visiting professor at Brandeis University and as composer-in-residence at Dartmouth College, which had commissioned a new work, *Fibonacci Mobile*, op. 187, scored for string quartet and piano four hands. He also received an honorary doctorate from the University of New Mexico and conducted a triumphant performance of *Karl V* in Munich. And so the anomalous state continued: he reaped honors, yet his recent music was not accepted, for after a few performances (sometimes, as with *Fibonacci Mobile*, only one) the works were not taken up again, even despite Timaeus's best efforts. Krenek wanted to succeed with concertgoers, but he was determined to push on with his experiments in idioms that were difficult for the listener. Some years before he had put the matter clearly:

As far as my work is concerned, I feel that I am directed by two forces which in their tangible effects are frequently at variance. From an early stage in my career, I have been attracted by the idea of pure, uncompromising creation, independent from the trends of the day, or at times explicitly opposed to them. . . . At the same time I was constantly tempted by the achievement of practical results in terms of "this world." . . . This presupposes a fair degree of adaptability, which proves to me that I have not really the makings of either a crusader or a hermit. . . .

Be this as it may, in spite of the urge to put my talents to practical use in the sense of worldly accomplishments, I secretly admire most of all the saint who is strong enough to rise above the challenge and temptation of "this world" and occupy his mind with the everlasting values exclusively. From time to time I . . . make some efforts to reach out in this direction, and perhaps attain a few uncharted points in the unknown territory of the esoteric, only to be drawn back again by the irresistible desire to produce things of immediate usefulness.⁴⁴

For the present, the ideal of the saint was in ascendance as Krenek pressed on into what most listeners would have agreed was "the unknown territory of the esoteric."

Fortunately, the Kreneks were by now sufficiently well off to allow him to satisfy a longing that went back to childhood. For some years he and Gladys would go on trips into the deserts of Southern California, where he worked on his music and relaxed by making crayon sketches and watercolor impressions of the vivid landscape. Unable to get too much of this environment after the gray days in Vienna, Berlin, Zürich, and St. Paul, he would come back with a sheaf of pictures, a spectacular tan, and often a completed score. But why come back? Gladys no longer needed to teach school to make ends meet, few paid him any heed in Los Angeles, and he worked as well or better in the sunlit desert. Thus in April 1966, they bought a small house at the base of ten-thousand-foot Mount San Jacinto on the western edge of Palm Springs.*

It seemed a good time to retire from mainstream, urban America, which was running out of control. Each day brought new horrors: the assassinations of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King, Jr.; rioting and arson in Detroit, Cleveland, and Watts; the savagery in Vietnam; campus anarchy and the teargassing and shooting of student demonstrators; the terrorism of paramilitary groups such as the Black Panthers. The fabric of American society seemed to be rotting away.

Parallel with all this was a confusion in the arts as new technology accelerated changes in materials and styles. In music electronic gear was being developed so swiftly that each new catalogue boasted a yet more compact and versatile synthesizer for sale. It appeared to be a time of seething creativity, and unquestionably for many it was. But the rate of change was so rapid and the proliferation of new resources so bewildering that much of the work being done was frantic and superficial. The definitive sounds of the times were not the emanations of the concert halls, but the clatter and roar of insufferable amplified rock or the infantile processed jingles accompanying advertisements on radio and television.

Still, except for its presence on the evening news, little of this confusion intruded on the quietness and serenity of Palm Springs. Golf, window shopping among the costly boutiques, partying behind high walls, and talk about the fortunes to be made in real estate—these sufficed to fill the days. Those wanting a livelier scene went to Las Vegas. At “The Springs,” as insiders liked to call it, there was nothing to disturb a composer concentrating on tricky tables of numbers or trying out new combinations on a Buchla synthesizer such as the Kreneks acquired in 1967.

But their freedom from distraction came at a price. For despite his penchant for withdrawal, Krenk needed the sense of belonging to something that represented order, dignity, and humane values—to Austria, the Catholic church, Vassar, Hamline, and the community of composers, signified for him by Stravinsky, Berg, We-

*This part of town was little developed and they were able to purchase the property for a reasonable amount, though they were soon surrounded by million-dollar mansions. In one of these lived Frederick Loewe, composer of the music for *My Fair Lady* and other Broadway hits. As a Viennese of Krenk's own generation, he had a proper appreciation of his neighbor, whom he called, with respect, “the Maestro.”

bern, and Sessions. He needed, too, association with strong, self-directed people such as Kraus, Mitropoulos, and even, in their unassuming way, Steinecke and Eimert. His wife had the strength but not the authority, for she was young and deferential. There were no groups to join, no powerful personalities from which to take assurance. Krenek's kind of music was never performed in Palm Springs; his kind of books could not be found there; his kind of lectures could not be heard. His kind of films—and he enjoyed good movies as much as ever—were never shown. (Eventually the Kreneks took to driving to Los Angeles for three-day movie binges.) At first the Kreneks were without any friends—certainly none with whom they could talk about the music that interested them—though in time John Norman, a professor of choral music at the College of the Desert in nearby Palm Desert, became an energetic and resourceful advocate of Krenek's vocal works, some of which he trained his students to perform. Krenek had quiet for his work, he had sunlight and the beauty of the desert and the mountains at his doorstep; but there were times of great loneliness, and this would affect his music.

Although he had virtually no ties with Palm Springs, he still had ties, if much attenuated, with the world, especially the music world, beyond. He faithfully read and from time to time contributed to the journals devoted to contemporary music, and occasionally he attended concerts at the Schönberg Institute, recently established in 1974 at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, or at the new University of California campus in San Diego (UCSD). He was warmly welcomed at UCSD, for on his advice Robert Erickson and Wilbur Ogdon had been recruited in 1966 to start the music department, and they quickly added Thomas Nee, who like themselves had studied with Krenek at Hamline. As the department grew and capable performers were added, Krenek's music was frequently performed at UCSD, and in 1970 he spent four weeks in residence there as a Regents Lecturer, giving talks that were later published in *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*. Henceforth, too, he would spend a substantial portion of nearly every year lecturing and performing in Europe.

Yet whether in Los Angeles, San Diego, or Vienna, he was in subtle ways a visitor, even a tourist. Serialism, to which he continued to be devoted, was thoroughly out of fashion among those who kept up with new music, and he was, as he put it in 1970, "blamed (a) for doing it at all, (b) for doing it too late, and (c) for still being at it."⁴⁵ Sacher was as loyal as ever, but others were gone or had lost touch. Steinecke had died in an auto accident just a few weeks after the row over *Leben des Orest*. Gubler had been struck and killed by an automobile in New York in 1965. Stravinsky was enfeebled by old age and illness, and they no longer met. Sessions, though full of energy and enjoying a remarkably productive period, had retired from Princeton and was absorbed in his work. Eimert, too, had retired and was no longer a force in Cologne.

Paul Fromm had likewise ceased to be a factor. In 1961 he had invited Krenek to

join the executive committee, as he termed it, of a new periodical, *Annals of New Music*, that he was launching. Krenek accepted, but by the time the periodical, renamed *Perspectives of New Music*, appeared in 1962, his role had been reduced to that of serving on an advisory board that included Stravinsky, Milhaud, Sessions, Piston, and Copland. Decisions were made by an editorial board, which included, among others, Babbitt, Arthur Berger, Elliott Carter, Irving Fine, Lukas Foss, and Leon Kirchner. After a few issues Krenek felt that the influence of what he called the "Princeton–New York axis" was too strong. As he told Fromm, "I feel that there is a little too much emphasis on the philosophical and scientific tenets dear to our friend Milton [Babbitt]. . . . If this manner of thinking and its extremely characteristic vocabulary appear on too many pages, somebody might get the idea that PNM is a cliquish affair, like for instance *Die Reihe*, which, for this very reason, has become a fairly obnoxious paper."⁴⁶ Fromm agreed, and hoped that a meeting of the advisory board, which Krenek was unable to attend, would correct the imbalance. But Krenek continued to be disaffected and resigned from the board shortly afterward. Following this, communication between them gradually ceased.

So it was that while Krenek kept himself informed about the world of music through his reading and his forays into nearby cities and the music centers of Germany and Austria (in 1968, for example, he visited Baden-Baden, Saarbrücken, Hamburg, Regensburg, and Vienna, as well as Prague, Basel, and Paris), he suffered in Palm Springs increasingly from isolation. This situation, combined with his distaste for the tumult and clangor of the times, tended to drive him in on himself.

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While his isolation affected the character of Krenek's music, it did not, surprisingly, diminish its quantity. The years between 1955 and 1970 were ones of stupendous productivity, during which he composed fifty-seven works. There were operas; songs with piano, instrumental, and orchestral accompaniments; choral music, chamber music, orchestral music, and piano music; works for solo instruments such as the harp; and electronic tapes. A few were little pieces for learners, but the majority were "big" works, if one takes for a measure their richness, intensity, and the erudition required to create them. Many were big, too, in terms of their length and the resources needed to perform them. What is more, they all bore the marks of creative vigor such as had appeared only intermittently in the works of the early fifties. It seems reasonable to conclude that Krenek's interest in electronic music, followed by his adoption of serialism, provided a powerful stimulus like that felt, albeit briefly, when he returned to tonality in 1926, and again, most lastingly, when he embraced the twelve-tone technique in 1932.

Those acquainted with his finest works come to expect certain qualities in Krenek's music, regardless of the medium or the idiom. They anticipate an impression of overall control exerted on behalf of purposeful order and design. That is, wherever there is contrast, countermovement, asymmetry, or conflict, there will be as well

an all-encompassing integration within which elements creating tension are perceived as ultimately serving the order and design: however unexpected, each detail is functionally relevant to the whole. These listeners also anticipate motivic and melodic inventiveness and sophistication and, where it is opportune, as in *Reisebuch* or the second movement of the Fourth Piano Sonata, lyricism of a very high order. With respect to his handling of instruments, they anticipate a vivid and varied palette of tonal color. They expect to be impressed by Krenek's exceptional understanding of the materials of music and how they interact, and where the scale of the work and its occasion warrant, they look for immense musical power, even grandeur, that is often streaked with irony.

These are the qualities of *Sestina*, but few of them are apparent in *Kette, Kreis, und Spiegel*, which immediately preceded it, or in *Marginal Sounds*, op. 162, which immediately followed it. In both these works Krenek was exploring the possibilities of serial patterning, using sharply incised percussive effects to emphasize the notes—presumably to call attention to their particularity so that one would be struck by the sound of the unexpected within the necessary. Despite an abundance of contrast and conflict, it is extremely difficult, and probably for many impossible, to recognize in these nervously rattling works the necessary—the overall integration—and they soon grow wearisome.

Not so *Horizon Circled*, op. 196, which, together with *Sestina*, ranks as a true masterwork of this period. Commissioned by Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, for the Meadow Brook Festival, and scored for an expanded orchestra, it was begun in Vienna on January 1, 1967, and finished in Baltimore on February 20, while Krenek was a visiting professor at the Peabody Institute. That he composed a work of its magnitude in such a short time is an indication of his creative energy during these years. Its six movements vary between tight and loose structures, between near anarchy and rigorous control, between stasis and forward thrust, all of which complement one another and intensify the listener's anticipations and responses.* In contrast with *Kette, Kreis, und Spiegel* and *Marginal Sounds*, *Horizon Circled* gives one throughout an impression of design, of the functional relevance of even the loosest portions. There are electrifying passages that may have been coolly composed but nonetheless evoke an image of Krenek exulting in the pulsing sonorities and crackly impingements. Not at all bombastic, the work has a power and abundance not found in any other work since *Medea* and the Second Violin Concerto, for the merits of *Sestina* are of a different, less exuberant kind.

From Three Make Seven, op. 177, another work for large orchestra that Krenek composed while touring Europe in 1960–1961, makes much of contrasts among timbres, and long sonorous lines in the strings offset well the somewhat fussy poin-

*A detailed analysis of this work by Wilbur Ogdon may be found in Krenek's *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 121–141. The title of the book is well chosen in view of its autobiographical nature, but it is also a semiprivate allusion to this work and suggests how much importance Krenek attaches to it.

tillism that alone might induce tedium. There is enough coherence to make the collisions of sound truly unexpected and exciting. Also unusually fine, but utterly different, is the beautiful miniature song cycle *Wechselrahmen* (Change of frames), op. 189, for soprano and piano accompaniment, composed in Tujunga during the midwinter of 1964–1965 and having for its text six short Expressionist poems by Emil Barth (1900–1958), a minor writer who lived in Munich and Düsseldorf. The poems dwell on death and the swift transition of life from light into darkness, and in their melancholy and imagery bring to mind Rilke's lines for *O Lacrymosa*. The music, too, has a similar lyric poignancy, but there the resemblance ends, for this is a work with many of the serial features of *Sestina*: the wide intervals and range of the vocal line and the nearly independent accompaniment, which frames and points up the voice with its own musical statements instead of filling a secondary, supportive role—though the work is not truly serialist, being more freely developed than the strictures of that technique would permit.

Other superior works of this period are *Glauben und Wissen* (To believe and to know), op. 194, commissioned by the government radio station in Hamburg and composed in Palm Springs during the summer of 1966; *Proprium für Mariae Geburt* (Proprium for the birth of Mary), op. 202, commissioned by the Abbey of Montserrat (one of the great religious shrines of Spain, located on a mountain northwest of Barcelona) and composed in Palm Springs during the spring of 1968; and *Messe Gib uns den Frieden* (Mass "Give us peace"), op. 208, commissioned for a festival of new church music by the Lutheran Alliance of Hamburg, begun while Krenek was in residence at UCSD early in 1970 and completed that fall following a tour of Europe. These are large works for soloists, choruses, and instrumental ensembles, though Krenek himself acknowledged that they are not of the importance of *Horizon Circled* because his conceptions were limited by the fact that most choruses would be unable to cope with truly complex scores. This restriction also precluded strict adherence to serial designs.

No such limits were in force when Krenek composed *Instant Remembered*, op. 201, commissioned by Dartmouth College for the Fourth International Webern Festival and composed at various times throughout 1967 and the spring of 1968 in Palm Springs, Honolulu, and Salzburg. The "instant" of the title is the moment of Webern's death. Krenek approached this work with great seriousness, principally, of course, because of his friendship with Webern and his great admiration for his music, but also because he was at the time on the board of directors of the Webern Society, which, with Dartmouth, was sponsoring the festival, and he wanted the occasion to be worthy of his friend. For his text he prepared a prologue that ended with "Eternity begins in the silent valley of Mittersill," the place where Webern was mistakenly shot. This was followed by passages from Plato, Kierkegaard, Goethe, Rilke, Seneca, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Kraus, of which half were to be spoken and half, including his own words, sung. The accompaniment was scored for a

chamber ensemble that included a large number of percussive instruments such as vibraphone, xylophone, celesta, glockenspiel, various drums, cymbals, maracas, temple blocks, a gong, a rattle, and so forth, an orchestration that emphasized the pointillist style of the music. A tape-recorded canon for six violins, three cellos, and a piano performing at three different speeds was to be played at the beginning and used as a background to the spoken passages.

Despite the risks Krenek took in mingling such a variety of elements, the piece succeeds brilliantly. Like the piano part of *Wechselrahmen*, the instruments provide not an accompaniment in the usual sense, but a setting for the voice. By itself, the instrumental music would be as stuttering and irksome as that of *Kette, Kreis, und Spiegel*, but, as in *Sestina*, the voice binds the sung passages together. The canon, which by its nature needs no external cohering factor, provides a similarly effective background for the spoken passages. The whole work has a somber eloquence and splendor like those of *Symphonic Elegy*, which was also dedicated to Webern's memory.

With the extreme range and glissandi for the voice and the rhythmical rappings of the instruments, especially the percussion group, *Instant Remembered* somewhat resembles the electronic music with which Krenek was also engaged, but with a mighty difference: it succeeded, whereas the electronic works did not. Working both with equipment belonging to San Fernando State College, to which his former student Beverly (Pinsky) Grigsby had access, and, later, with his own Buchla synthesizer, he created works for tape alone and works in which electronic sounds were mingled with those of the human voice and ordinary acoustic instruments. The effects were often ludicrous because the whistles, the swishings of white noise, the klaxon swoops, the rattles and thumps were so colorless, especially when heard with the rich timbres of pianos, a pipe organ, a harp and oboe, or a chamber ensemble. Moreover, movies and television had seized on electronic sounds for everything from science-fiction extravaganzas to advertisements for automotive parts, making clichés of them and giving them connotations likely to arouse laughter when heard in the midst of intentionally serious music. As materials for music, the sounds he was using had become hopelessly tainted and outdated.

One work, *Tape and Double*, op. 207, for electronic sounds and two pianos, which Krenek composed in Palm Springs in the winter of 1969–1970, almost succeeded when performed by Karl and Margaret Kohn. In the piano parts there are passages of flashing bravura, which the Kohns performed with such spirit that they almost swept the listener past the sounds issuing from loudspeakers. Without the Kohns, however, *Tape and Double* was just another experiment that did not come off.

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Aside from a few minor works, Krenek stayed close to serialism until 1970, though the degree of adherence varied. With the exception of *Sestina*, those follow-

ing the technique with relative strictness were received unenthusiastically, whereas more loosely organized pieces—that is, those with many features of serialism, such as swift transitions from one instrument to another, but having a more open pattern to allow for little capsules of melodic material—often pleased audiences. This was especially true of the larger choral works, for the human voice added warmth and drama such as were notably missing from, say, *Quaestio Temporis*, which might best be performed by automatons.

Yet even the more readily accepted works were rarely performed after their premieres. This was nothing new for Krenek, of course; he had been through it with twelve-tone music and had eventually seen a work such as *Karl V* come to be admired. His income from commissions and public appearances was enough that he and Gladys would not suffer if he stayed with serialism, and so he did, as a matter of principle, almost of honor.⁴⁷ He knew that he and Babbitt were the only composers of any stature still using it, but he was convinced that its originators had abandoned serialism while there were still many potentialities to be discovered. And he kept hoping that audiences would catch up with him.

"A composer engaged in progressive [music] is always hopeful," he explained in a radio talk in early 1960. "He writes for himself, and in doing so, he is quite sure that he writes potentially for everybody, for he thinks that he is not basically different from his fellow men, only perhaps a few paces ahead of them. Consequ[ently] he appeals to a minority, but he never doubts that there is such a minority, and in a sense he does not even care that it becomes a majority. He is only concerned that the minority stays big enough to support him."⁴⁸ Krenek's did. Increasingly he was seen as a "name," as he had not been in the days of obscurity during the forties and early fifties, and invitations came to him. He was helped by the fact that German and Austrian radio stations were required to present some recent music, while in America he was sought after by colleges and universities, which in the past had paid little heed to contemporary arts.

A remarkable change had taken place on the campuses. The academic environment was charged with excitement over new developments in science and technology, and the guardians of the fine arts wanted to keep up with the times. Across the land academic institutions were building arts centers and inviting poets, painters, and composers to grace them. Thus, where once only a few, such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, had shown more than a passing interest in contemporary music, by the late fifties the larger and more wealthy schools were becoming its most important patrons. This sponsorship was not the same as appointing émigré composers to regular faculty positions, as had occurred with Schönberg, Hindemith, Milhaud, and of course Krenek himself. Now the composer was on campus not to teach courses but to be an Artist, almost a cult figure. Those officials issuing the invitations wanted to display their acumen and make an impression by engaging the most talked-about figures doing the newest things, which meant vying for persons such

as Cage and Stockhausen. But because the supply was limited, others were asked as well.

This did not mean that Americans generally had begun to relent in their dislike of most new music. The audiences for it, by and large, were limited to academic communities and a very small portion of the concertgoing public in such cities as New York and Los Angeles. (When Boulez became the music director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in 1971, he quickly found out how small that portion was: the twentieth-century works he preferred to conduct sent people hurrying for the nearest exit, and he was forced to cajole them with old favorites from the past.)

The audience was larger in Europe, but even there Timaeus, who worked tirelessly trying to place Krenek's recent music, encountered difficulties. Audiences wanted to hear his earlier works—*Reisebuch*, inevitably, and *Leben des Orest* or *Dark Waters*. At the radio stations Timaeus ran into just the opposite problem, for there the programmers, subsidized by the government and able to follow their own interests, wanted something more "up-to-date" than Krenek's serialism—as Timaeus reported with some embarrassment after laboring to secure performances of *From Three Make Seven*.⁴⁹ He did not say so, but what the programmers probably had in mind were the latest works from the Darmstadt-Cologne group and its followers.

Still Krenek pushed ahead, and when he was asked to conduct his own works, he seized the occasion to include serial compositions. Thus, for example, for a concert in Winterthur in the winter of 1961 he scheduled his Concerto Grosso no. 2, op. 25, which he had composed in that city in 1924 and dedicated "To my friends in Switzerland"; *Eleven Transparencies*, op. 142, a twelve-tone work composed in 1954; and *Kette, Kreis, und Spiegel*. Shortly before he had taken up serialism he had written that a listener can grasp music in three ways: sensually, emotionally, and structurally. In the first way, the elements are enjoyed for the simple charm of their sound. In the second, feelings are evoked by established conventions that constitute a kind of sub- or protolanguage, or by associations founded in the listener's personal history. In the third, the formal relations among the elements are perceived.⁵⁰ Krenek wanted his serial works to be grasped structurally, but the musical thought processes, which in his lectures in 1936 he had said were the true subject to be attended to by the listener (a point that he repeated in his inaugural lecture at Hamline), cannot be perceived through the ear. (The processes of serial works can, however, be perceived through the eye, as Ligeti demonstrated in his analysis of Boulez's *Structures Ia*.) As Gottfried Michael Koenig wrote in *Die Reihe* in 1962, after others had left serialism behind: "The determinism of a [serial] work occurs . . . outside the range of experience of the listener; he cannot even hear if an event obeys the complicated mechanism of serial rules. . . . There are works of Cage where the mode of musical perception is not so very much different from that of certain serial works."⁵¹ Krenek told members of the American Musicological Society in 1960, "The more parameters are regulated by serial premeditation, the less predictable is the result in all its details.

Thus the element of improvisation is built into the process of strict prearrangement, and the unexpected occurs by necessity.”⁵²

For the composer, yes, but not, ordinarily, for the listener, who has no expectations against which the unexpected can occur. Now and then a detail—a raucous trombone glissando or a rapping on the frame of a piano—may startle, not because it is unexpected in terms of overall design but because the listener is unused to such sounds. Yet even there, whatever interest may exist initially is quickly spent because in a short time all serial music, regardless of how one feels about it, begins to sound alike. Seeking to explain why others discarded the technique so quickly, the composer R. S. Brindle wrote: “It now seems that integral serialism was bound to exhaust itself through sheer similarity of results. However the systems were evolved, permuted, and manipulated, the music always remained within the same limited confines. After a certain point, nothing strikingly different could emerge.”⁵³

Why, then, did Krenek persist? It was not a simple matter of principle and honor, important as trying to live by an ideal could be for him. Nor was it a question of stubbornness. No, it was because within the confines of serialism, strikingly different—and truly unexpected—things *did* emerge for him. Reading his essay “Extent and Limits of Serial Technique,” one senses how exciting he found the construction of a serial work, how pleased he was when an unforeseen element appeared—“by necessity.” And he, with his numbers and tables, would have fully understood the necessity. But there was a danger, one that in 1910 William Butler Yeats had described:

The fascination of what’s difficult
Has dried the sap out of my veins, and rent
Spontaneous joy and natural content
Out of my heart.⁵⁴

Krenek had sensed this danger as far back as August 16, 1924, when he wrote to Bekker that he must guard himself against “the petrification of a system.” In 1941 he had reminded himself in his journal that to prevail, music must have spontaneity. In 1964 in a long essay he ridiculed the “charlatan attempts” of the Darmstadt-Cologne composers “to make themselves important with pompous words” and their “dilettantish formula rubbish.”⁵⁵ Yet in that same year he followed the lead of Nono in *Il canto sospeso* (1956) and Stockhausen in *Zyklus* (1959) and used as the basis of a composition a number series discovered by Leonardo Fibonacci (c. 1170–1230) in which each number after the first two is the sum of the two preceding ones: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, and so on. The proportions in the series are similar to those of the Golden Section of the Greeks, which for many centuries has had a major part in architectural designs. Perhaps in using the Fibonacci series, which otherwise is but an arithmetic curiosity, the composers thought their music would be endowed with some of the elegance that the Golden Section is reputed to possess.

In Krenek's *Fibonacci Mobile*, op. 187, however, which he composed for string quartet and piano four hands in the late autumn of 1964 on a commission from Dartmouth College, elegance was at risk, for he also followed the lead of Stockhausen in *Klavierstück XI* (1956) and other works, Boulez in *Structures II* (1956–1961), and Pousseur in *Mobile* (1956–1958) and allowed for real chance, derived from the performer's whim or the throw of dice. In Alexander Calder's sculptural works, to which the term "mobile" was first applied, metallic shapes are moved by random currents of air into chance relations with one another. In Krenek's mobile, large blocks of music composed in accordance with strict serial procedures were to be performed in a sequence arrived at by chance. He hoped that because the blocks were derived from the same numerical series, much as in Calder's mobiles the elements had similar biomorphic shapes, they would interact in surprising, but musically interesting, even satisfying, ways.

Back in 1956, when Krenek had returned from Europe full of excitement over series, rotations, and tables of digits and was thinking of trying serialism, he encountered Erickson, who irritated him by asking, "Why not do it the way Cage does? Then you won't have to know any numbers. If you want to produce meaningless stuff, go meaningless all the way."⁵⁶ A listener thoroughly confused by the mixture of serial and aleatory music embodied in *Fibonacci Mobile* might well think that Erickson had a point.

But Krenek went ahead anyway, and *Fibonacci Mobile* may point to the best and simplest reason of all for his adherence to serialism: he was fascinated by numbers and tables and he thoroughly enjoyed manipulating them. As for communication, he had told his audience in his first Gauss lecture that, although it is usually considered the main motivation for the organization of a piece of music, in serialism it is "a chance result."⁵⁷ The fun was in fitting part to part, rather as in piecing together a jigsaw puzzle: the worker is indifferent to the final picture. Krenek once remarked that composing a serial work was for the private amusement of the composer. And in 1959, near the beginning of his long involvement with serialism, a musician asked whom he wished to surprise with the unexpected elements that the technique turned up; he answered: "Myself, my friend—myself."⁵⁸

But the time was coming when communication would again be more than a chance result.

12 · THE LATER OPERAS: KRENEK AS LIBRETTIST

Among the students of Franz Schreker who sat in Berlin coffeehouses discussing how to make their mark and concluding that composing operas offered the best chance, only Ernst Krenek had any notable success in that medium. Karol Rathaus composed one opera, *Fremde Erde* (Foreign ground, 1931), which vanished. Alois Hába enjoyed a mild *succès de curiosité* with *Matka* (1929), in which he used quarter-tones, but outside Prague this and two other operas he composed were of interest only to theorists concerned with microtonality. Krenek, however, not only wrote more operas than all his fellow students put together, but with *Jonny spielt auf*, and to a lesser degree with *Leben des Orest* and *Karl V*, attracted so much attention and so pleased audiences that to this day most people think of him first as a composer of operas.

There is a glamor about opera that attracts unusual attention to its composers—an aura created by the immense amount of publicity needed to sustain it, by the star system, by the barrage of interviews, news stories, and essays (in the writing of which Krenek has always been diligent) that precede opening nights, and by the elaborate attention given to opera by music critics. And in what other medium is it virtually mandatory at premieres that the composer appear on stage to take bows with the performers and the conductor?

Krenek's operas are about evenly divided between the serious and the comic, and among them are seven grand operas, five light operas, seven chamber operas, and two television operas, of which all but two—*Bluff* and *Kehraus um St. Stephan*—have been produced. Those who regard Krenek as a creator of operas, moreover, tend to think of him only as the maker of the music, when in fact he also wrote the libretti for all but five of his twenty-one stage works. How important his libretti were to him was apparent in the program notes he prepared for Bekker, where he

insisted that opera is a form of *drama* in which the music is of secondary importance, comparable to the scenery, costumes, and lighting; the purpose of these is not to display the art of the singer or bathe the listener in rich orchestral sounds but to intensify the words and action. The inclusion of music, then, places opera at the summit of expressive possibilities for illuminating human experience, especially in its spiritual aspects.

Yet for all the boldness of his assertions, Krenek was puzzled as to *how* music related to the drama. At first he sought to evoke appropriate feelings by means of associations long established by custom. But twelve-tone music could not summon the feelings linked with tonality, while serialism virtually eliminated what was left. After composing *Karl V*, Krenek concluded that the music communicated intensity of feeling without suggesting either a particular emotion or an object of an emotion. It enhanced the text by emphasis, articulation, attention to key words and passages, and the conjoining of the elements, thereby asserting the design of the work and endowing it with coherence and unity.¹ Yet he well knew that, as he put it later, “the tremendous attraction emanating from opera ever since [Monteverdi] issues not from the expeditious parts of the music which are best adapted to underscore the continuity of the action, but from the sections that are musically most elaborate and bring the action virtually to a standstill.”²

Modern composers had been moving toward “real time” in their works under the influence of films—the new technical possibilities in stagecraft that allowed them to emulate the pace of films, the increasing use of colloquial dialogue, and the abandoning of closed musical forms. Even so, Krenek admitted,

while during arias, and especially in ensembles, the visible progress of the dramatic vehicle is interrupted, the stream of emotion pervading the whole is intensified, which in many cases amounts to an internal acceleration of the acting, setting off [i.e., counterbalancing] its external retardation. . . . The most autonomous, most concentrated and coherent musical structure is the most efficient and eloquent messenger of emotional energies. Therefore it is possible in the most fully organized musical forms in opera, which are the most anti-naturalistic, because of their breaking up of the continuity of real time, to depict with surprising brevity emotional movements the magnitude of which in a medium consistent with ordinary time would require lengthy psychological preparation.³

But Krenek was interested in ideas, which is why he and so many of his contemporaries followed the example of Wagner and Schreker and wrote their own libretti. And some, including Krenek, wondered if opera were really possible when the audience cared only for the music. “The so-called ‘reforms,’” he remarked in 1936, when this issue was being most earnestly debated,

which revolutionize the development of opera from time to time are always concerned with giving the intellectual content of language and drama a new, more crucial

position. All innovators agree in seeing operatic singing as a kind of heightened speech. . . . These reforms seem necessary because opera, when left to itself, shows a tendency to become an exhibition of vocal qualities and singing achievements. These fulfill a sensual need of the public's and explain why the "reforms" were and are so passionately fought against at first: they rob opera, for a time at least, of its pleasurable, sensual quality.⁴

But at the same time, he had been insisting in the lectures collected in *Über neue Musik* on the autonomy of music and its inability to express any ideas except musical ones. How, then, could it intensify the drama without compromising its *own* thought processes? In attempting to deal with this question, Krenek went far beyond his earlier claims, far beyond any other apologist for innovations:

In modern opera music is not merely a means of heightening, ennobling verbal language—it is not there to make the words more eloquent, so to speak; it is deliberately contrasted with the words, placed behind the words, making them transparent so that you can see their second, inner significance. . . . The great changes in musical and dramatic attitudes have made it possible for present-day opera to include in its orbit important and intellectually difficult matter, without merely picking out some picturesque trait or other to represent it, as Romantic opera had thought to be the only possibility. Now opera can work out its real central significance. . . . *Above all, since the new operatic style aims at antithetical tension, . . . it can probe into the deeper intellectual strata of the theme treated.*⁵ (emphasis added)

Here, in words so matter-of-fact in tone that one is led to wonder if Krenek understood their full import, is a whole new aesthetic for musical drama. With varying degrees of strictness, he would adhere to it throughout all of his operatic works to come.

He had called *Karl V* "a stage work *with music*" to emphasize the preeminence of the action, dialogue, and, especially, ideas. In fashioning his earlier operas he developed the words and music simultaneously with the aid of elaborate scenarios. But with *Karl V* he wrote a full libretto before turning to the music, which henceforth would be his standard procedure. He did not introduce scenes that would require music of great interest in its own right, nor did he exploit lyric possibilities in scenes created out of dramatic necessity. This is not to say that he treated the music as incidental, for it was in his view every bit as integral an element as the text. But he resented any obstacles to understanding imposed by the music—or by directors who manipulated the score to give the music greater prominence, as seemed to have happened when he saw *Karl V* for the first time in 1958 in Düsseldorf.⁶

Clearly the new aesthetic put him more at odds with conventional views, which have been well summarized by Gary Schmidgall: "Opera has to do with heights. . . . The world of opera is one of high relief, magnification, escalation." The composer

and librettist must “think primarily as artists willing to forego prosaic and rhetorical niceties as well as the value of realism in order to seek moments of expressive crisis—nuclear moments in which potential musical and dramatic energy is locked.”⁷⁷ Krenek was not particularly concerned with realism, as the time shifts and symbolism of *Karl V* showed, but there were many “prosaic and rhetorical niceties” over which he took great pains and that he certainly would not forego. Having no closed musical forms and tending (even when not realistic) to adhere to the pace, rhythms, and accents of ordinary speech, his operas henceforth moved toward the condition of plays. And the more they did so, the more they had to succeed as plays, regardless of the music.

Even so, the first operas following *Karl V*—*Cefalo e Procri*, *Tarquin*, *What Price Confidence?*, *Dark Waters*, *Pallas Athene weint*, and *The Bell Tower*—were sufficiently operatic in their vocal lines, the patterns of their dynamics, and their tonal colorations that one could respond to them as to more conventional operas, that is, by endeavoring to find an expressive link between the musical ideas and the dramatic ideas, despite an increasingly “antithetical tension.” This changed in 1961 with a television opera entitled *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* (Computed and confounded), which Krenek created during the period of his greatest interest in serialism. Though not a truly serial work, it exhibited the stylistic features of serial vocal works such as *Sestina*. For its music he made charts and other prescriptive guides such as he would use for a purely serial work; indeed, this became his practice henceforth, even though dramatic exigencies precluded strict adherence to them for more than short intervals. These prescriptions broke down fixed meters, freeing him to follow the medieval practice, well known to him from his musicological studies, of fitting the musical time values to those of speech. Phrasing and rhythmical patterns were shaped by Krenek’s feeling for how actors would *read* the lines. Now the vocal parts really did resemble heightened speech, and the challenge to the listener was not to integrate musical with dramatic ideas but to determine what, if anything, singing did for a work that seemed less an opera than simply a play.

With *Pallas Athene weint* Krenek had begun to divide the vocal lines from the instrumental music, which became less an accompaniment and more a semi-independent entity. By 1961, following his embracing of serialism, he made the separation so wide, as he would a few years later with the piano and vocal parts of *Wechselrahmen*, that in portions of *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* one was conscious not of a unity but of a trinity: the play, the singing, and the sounds of the instruments—sounds that stood forth starkly through his emphasis on tintinnabulations produced by side drums, wood blocks, xylophones, tambourines, and triangles. Now he had contrast in abundance. Did it make the meanings of the later operas more comprehensive and profound?

Certainly contrast can do this, as *Wechselrahmen* would show, if the music has musical interest and expresses musical ideas—even when the effect is one of anti-

thetical tension. Yet mere difference, however striking, does not of itself create such tension. For, as innumerable songs and operas have shown, music, whether contrasted or not, can work on words to create contextualized meanings exactly as words act on one another in a poem to create contextualized meanings unique to that poem.* In such circumstances music truly clarifies and deepens the meaning of the text, as Krenek himself had many times asserted. It establishes the emotional ambience, controls the pace of the action, punctuates and emphasizes the dialogue, and provides the subtlest of nuances. In this regard the music of *Orpheus und Eurydike*, *Leben des Orest*, and *Karl V* was superb, while the music of other operas down to *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* was at least functionally effective.

But starting with *Ausgerechnet* much of the interaction between the music and the libretto, when it even occurs, seems contingent and discrete. There are pacing and punctuation, to be sure, but almost no contextual enrichment because the music, however ingenious in construction, is so diminished in musical interest and expressiveness. (Here, however, exceptions must be made for a duet and the final sextet in the television opera *Der Zauberspiegel* [The magic mirror, 1966] and the sophisticated parodistic passages in *Sardakai* [1969]. Indeed, at moments the music of the last operas calls so much attention to itself that it becomes distracting.) Be that as it may, beginning with *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* Krenek's operas would have to succeed primarily as plays: he himself would have to be, first of all, a playwright.

Even before the necessity arose he had filled that role well with *What Price Confidence?* (op. 111), created in St. Paul during the winter of 1944–1945. A one-act drawing-room comedy based on a charmingly absurd proposition, it is written in a slightly stilted English that gives it the air of a period piece quite appropriate to its archly Edwardian treatment of fashionable adultery. The libretto is so well knit, the characters so distinct and well defined, and the action so brisk that it would be possible to perform the work as a play without the music—though then it would lose considerably more than half of its appeal and would seem just another of the many imitations of Wilde, Barrie, and Pinero. By itself the twelve-tone music is not particularly interesting except for the brief interlude between the scenes, but it supports the dialogue and action well, and the work as a whole is delightful. By limiting the cast to four and using only a piano for accompaniment, Krenek hoped that it would appeal to directors of small companies and opera workshops; but because the vocal parts demanded expertise such as few opera singers in America possessed at the time, it was not performed until the spring of 1962 in Saarbrücken.

*A familiar example occurs in "The Second Coming" by Yeats. "Slouches" is not ordinarily a word that conveys menace; quite the opposite, in fact, for it suggests a certain clumsiness and flaccidity. But in the last lines of the poem, "And what rough beast, its hour come round at last / Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?" the word is changed with menace derived from the poem's cumulative imagery, to which it too contributes. The chimera slouches toward Bethlehem not because it is limp and floppy but because it is so immense and brutal that it is indifferent to its surroundings and moves with careless certainty toward its goal.

During the 1970s it was staged with élan and impressive musicianship by members of the San Francisco-based Western Opera Company. Yet it has never received the attention it merits, perhaps because those capable of performing it do not wish to work so hard on something as indubitably minor, however appealing, as this.

Much more ambitious was *Dark Waters* (op. 125), the opera commissioned by Mitropoulos late in 1949. In his program notes for the Darmstadt production Krenek remarked that the work was "somewhat metaphysical," because a mysterious young woman representing the contingency of life suddenly appears from nowhere, and other characters project upon her ideas of who and what she is that are reflective of their own obsessions. But Krenek claimed too much for a diffuse and confused melodrama that brings to mind not Melville, whose short story "The Confidence Man" suggested some of the action to Krenek, but rather Maxwell Anderson at his worst in the gangster melodrama *Key Largo*. The dialogue (written in English) is plodding and banal ("There is something strange in your voice, so tempting, so full of promise"), and sometimes it is unintentionally funny, as when a young man falls precipitously in love with the mysterious young woman, persuades her to run away with him to begin a new life, and suddenly remembers a small omission: "My name is Phil. What's yours?" The agreeable music that in places hovers on the verge of tonality could not redeem such weaknesses.

Krenek, as we have seen, was marking time during the period when *Dark Waters* was conceived, but prompted by his visits to Europe in 1950 and 1951 he began to think of returning to grand opera. Joseph McCarthy had begun his assault on the State Department in February 1950, and by late 1951, when Krenek was searching for a subject for a large work, McCarthyism was in full cry. It reminded him of the Nazis' attacks on liberalism and intellectual distinction and sent him looking—as he had when he wrote the libretto for *Karl V*—for parallels in the past, especially in the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, the latter of which he perceived as the "stronghold of Fascism."⁸ Once again, as when he wrote his history of "Ath-burg," he was drawn to the figure of Alkibiades—playboy, womanizer, brazen promoter of his own interests. He decided to make him the center of a libretto, based on Thucydides and Plutarch, which he began to write at the end of 1951 and completed in June 1953. Even though he intended parallels with contemporary issues in the United States, he foresaw little likelihood of the opera's being produced by an American company; thus he wrote the libretto in German. The music was completed by December 1953, but as there were no immediate prospects for performance, Krenek did not finish orchestrating it until the end of February 1955, by which time a premiere in Hamburg was assured.

From the days when he and Fritz Demuth had planned *Die Zwingburg*, Krenek had been concerned with the struggle against tyranny. In 1938, concerning a description of his works to date that he was preparing for Nicolas Slonimsky, he remarked that to him the theme of freedom was especially important.⁹ Looking

back from a greater distance in 1970 he reiterated, "The idea of freedom in its many aspects has become a dominant concept in many of my dramatic works."¹⁰ McCarthyism reminded him of how beleaguered political and intellectual freedom had been throughout human history; he therefore introduced Sokrates into his opera, now entitled *Pallas Athene weint* (Pallas Athena weeps, op. 144), to be its symbol and spokesman. But, as Krenek pointed out in his program notes for the Hamburg production, Sokrates' pupils showed that his teachings could not withstand a political crisis: Alkibiades, an unscrupulous sensualist, destroys Athens; Meton, a radical pacifist, carries the master's lessons to the point of absurdity; and Meletos, the McCarthy-esque character (Krenek described him some years later as "the old-fashioned type of republican patriot who pretends to stand up for the liberties of true democracy while he actually is undermining them with authoritarian, reactionary schemes"),¹¹ betrays his teacher.

The opera begins with a prologue set in Elysium, where Pallas Athene laments the downfall of Athens and the death of Sokrates. The shade of the philosopher counsels her not to mourn; he had borne witness for humankind, knowing that he would pay with his life. What troubles him now is the irony that humankind, fighting to preserve peace and freedom, adopts the methods of the enemy and loses both. "Can one fight for peace?" he asks; the shades of the dead add, "When will man attain the goal of freedom through wisdom?" How, they want to know, did Athens, which had sought that goal under the tutelage of Sokrates, so dreadfully perish? The opera presents the answer.

Alkibiades, captain of the Athenian forces, is defeating the Spartans when he is summoned home to answer the false charge that he mutilated sacred images of Hermes. Enraged, he goes over to the enemy. Timaea, the Spartan queen, falls in love with him, and they elope. But an Athenian priestess whom Alkibiades had violated (a detail Krenek invented) uses her powers of divination to lead the Spartans in pursuit. They overtake the lovers near a cave where Meton has been hiding to escape military service. Sokrates appears, and in his presence Meton is killed by Meletos for revealing that Meletos mutilated the images to incite the people against Alkibiades. Moments later Alkibiades and Timaea appear, followed by the Spartans, who kill Alkibiades. Now the triumphant enemy enters and begins to raze Athens. Sokrates confronts the Spartan king and tells him, "You are afraid of the laughter of the free. This is why you crave power and spread terror around you. Because you scorn the dignity of man." Meletos, who has joined the enemy, offers Sokrates a chance to escape, but Sokrates rejects it, assuring Meletos that he will not give away his secret. As Sokrates is led away to death, the citizens of Athens, believing him to be responsible for their fate, revile and spit on him before being whipped back to the task of dismantling the walls of the city.

Attention is divided between the complementary figures of the colorful Alkibiades, who in temperament resembles Shakespeare's Hotspur or Richard the Third,

and Sokrates, the grave advocate of restraint and reason. The misadventures of Alkibiades energize the action and bind the events together, while the comments of Sokrates serve to point out their universal significance. The grandeur of the music lifts the action above old-fashioned sex-and-violence melodrama and reinforces Krenek's lesson for our times. The full orchestra and chorus surround the listener with a sonorous immensity in which the soloists have melodious lines based on seven different tone rows—one for each of the principals. The rows are loosely handled, but because they are subject to constant modification there are no leitmotifs (though Krenek did assign characteristic intervals to the *dramatis personae* to give flavor to their personalities). The orchestra does not accompany the singers in the conventional way, yet it does swell the dramatic tension, help to elucidate personalities, and underscore feelings and motivations as in traditional grand opera. Beginning and ending with Sokrates emphasizes the overall theme. Although without the music some of his lines would seem a bit platitudinous, taken as a whole the opera has great power and a somber splendor.

Mitropoulos, to whom Krenek described his plans before the libretto was finished, wrote on June 30, 1951: "Naturally, I am expecting that work to be as important as *Charles the Fifth*—in other words, a big work. Anyhow, you must not forget the possibility of composing it in a way to make it possible to perform it in concert form with a certain kind of stylization, as I made with *Wozzeck*.* . . . In other words, make it possible to give a complete impression of its contents in concert form." He did not think that the Metropolitan Opera Company would ever be able to produce such an opera as his friend described, but he hoped that he could present it with his orchestra, and he promised to seek financial support so that Krenek might devote himself to the work.¹²

He did not succeed with either aim, but his words may have encouraged Krenek to write music that in places has the concertlike appeal of the set pieces of old-fashioned operas. In 1954 Krenek quarried a *Pallas Symphony* (op. 137) from such passages, which he conducted in Hamburg before completing the opera. In 1969 he conducted a concert version of the full opera, which was broadcast by the government radio station in Prague. The program had been scheduled while Alexander Dubček was head of the state and great freedom of expression was allowed. Dubček was removed from power before the broadcast, but as no one told the radio officials not to go ahead, they simply did, for they admired the opera's libertarian sentiments.¹³

So had the audience when the opera was premiered in Hamburg on October 17, 1955, with Leopold Ludwig conducting. It followed a performance of *The Magic Flute* during a festive week celebrating the opening of Hamburg's newly restored

*Mitropoulos had recently presented *Wozzeck* in concert form with Eileen Farrell as Marie and Mack Harrell as Wozzeck, accompanied by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. By "stylization" he meant lighting, costumes, and a few dramatic movements and gestures.

opera house, which had been almost wholly destroyed by bombs in 1943.* Although the twelve-tone idiom caused some reserve and many in the audience would have preferred a less somber work for the occasion, the opera was received respectfully, and Krenek and the cast were given an ovation. He himself thought Heinz Sauerbaum as Alkibiades and Helga Pilarszyk as the priestess were poor. Moreover, because the stage director, Günther Rennert, would not permit the actors to touch each other, the full force of the passion of the women Alkibiades seduced could not be communicated. Nevertheless, Heinze Joachim, a devoted admirer of Krenek's music who reviewed the production for *Die Welt*, *Melos*, and *The Musical Quarterly*, praised the singers, conductor, and director and expressed the belief that *Pallas Athene weint* surpassed *Jonny*, *Leben des Orest*, and even *Karl V* in its vitality and rich expressiveness. Krenek, he wrote, showed a sure instinct for the stage in placing Alkibiades between rival women (one of whom, it should be remembered, Krenek invented). In his opinion, such a gifted dramatist could transmute material reality into the spiritual. As for the music, it was decisive proof that the twelve-tone technique was no empty formula but a living, organic resource for the creative musician.

Hearing good reports, the director of the Landestheater in Linz wrote at once to request permission to stage the first Austrian production. Krenek agreed, but the production was delayed until the spring of 1957. His mother, who attended, thought the production rather mediocre, though "good for Linz." Mannheim had done a better job during the previous fall, for that production she regarded as very fine.¹⁴

Another admirer—at least of the libretto—was Adlai Stevenson. Wishing to express his esteem for Stevenson, Krenek translated the libretto and sent it to him as a Christmas present following his second presidential defeat in 1956 by Dwight D. Eisenhower. Stevenson wrote to thank Krenek on January 25, 1957; he called the libretto superb ("I have read it with fascination, swept along on its mighty moving crest") and asked that he be informed if a production were planned for the United States. Touching on his defeat, Stevenson observed:

It is not, as you imply, always easy to have faith in the public judgment—"the people"—as we are fond of saying. . . . But the trouble is not them, as I see it, so much as what they know, think, see, hear, and feel. When communication, through all the senses, is misleading, when it conceals facts, when it cloaks reality in euphoria, then you can hardly blame the people. It seems to me, in short, that it is not the people but communication that has disappointed our classic concepts.

So, he added, he would continue to believe in the people.¹⁵ Earlier, Mitropoulos, pondering the inability of mankind, especially "us intellectuals and thinkers," to do better than Sokrates in answering the latter's great question ("When will man attain

*This restored opera house should not be confused with the later new opera house in which Krenek's *Der goldene Bock* premiered in 1964.

the goal of freedom through wisdom?”), put his faith elsewhere after seeing the full libretto: “The answer may lie in artists like you, who are devoting, still with enthusiasm, their skill and their genius to putting in artistic form those great dramas of the human race. So I send you a great bravo.”¹⁶

Yet after its brave start the opera was not taken up by other houses, despite a strenuous letter-writing effort made by Krenek on its behalf, and after the Prague broadcast it disappeared for nearly two decades. Then in 1988 it was brought back, again in concert form, during the Vienna Festival, where it achieved a spectacular success with both audience and critics. Even though Krenek in his later operas increasingly subordinated the music and moved toward pure drama, with *Pallas Athene weint* he still retained so much of conventional opera that it could triumph in concert form, as works still to come, such as *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*, could not.

The Bell Tower (op. 153), the one-act opera written on a commission from the Fromm Foundation in 1955–1956, was, like *Dark Waters*, based on a story by Melville; also like *Dark Waters*, it had little merit. The stereotypical characters (a mad genius who will sacrifice everything for his art, a young woman mesmerized by him, philistine townspeople who denounce the artist) speak in orotund clichés; the action is wholly predictable; and the rather pedestrian music offers little to offset the triteness of the libretto.

Triteness, however, was the last charge that could be raised against the nimble-witted, facetious *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* (op. 179), which Krenek wrote for the Austrian government television station in Vienna between December 10, 1960, when he began sketching the libretto in Friedrichshafen, West Germany, and New Year’s Day 1962, when he finished the orchestration at his home in Tujunga. Like *What Price Confidence?* this work could succeed as a play without music. Indeed, it almost does, for with it Krenek went far beyond all previous works in subordinating the music, which in its quasi-serial mode is less closely tied to the text; nevertheless, within its severe limits the music well serves the pacing and dynamics of the action.

Skillfully produced by Hermann Lanske with excellent acting, singing, and photography, and with Krenek conducting an orchestra comprising members of the Vienna Symphony, this clever and appealing spoof was broadcast on July 25, 1962. It showed that the comic spirit that had enlivened *Sprung, Jonny, Schwergewicht*, and many of Krenek’s essays but had seemed to have vanished since last seen in *What Price Confidence?* was as sprightly as ever. With some minor adjustments this opera could have been staged, but despite Timaeus’s efforts to have it accepted at Essen, Kassel, and Berlin, it was never produced again. After a rebroadcast from Vienna it was consigned to the studio vaults. Today, with our thriving computer culture, it would be, if anything, even more timely and amusing: it should be rescued from obscurity.

The nearest English equivalent for the title, “Computed and Confounded,” does not begin to suggest all the ancillary meanings. *Ausgerechnet* also means, roughly,

“that would happen,” while *verspielt* means “lost,” both in the sense of “played wrong” or “badly led” and as when a child is completely absorbed in a game. Putting all these together one might take the title to mean, “It turned out for them as they deserved.”¹⁷ Lest anyone fail to take his point, Krenek called the work a “*Spiel*”-*Oper*. This is another pun, for while *Spieleoper* is the common term for a comic opera, by placing *Spiel* in quotation marks he singled it out for attention: the word also means “play” in the sense of gambling, and this comic opera is concerned with a gambler’s attempt to conquer a roulette wheel with the aid of a computer.

Markus, a widower and owner of a casino, has a daughter on whom he dotes, though she constantly worries him with her desire for an airplane. He does not worry about anyone breaking the casino’s bank, for, as he points out in the opening line of the opera, “Incomprehensible chance turns the wheel of the world. What is above today sinks into the abyss tomorrow.” In other words, the gambler always loses in the end. But Fernando, an engineer at an airplane factory, thinks he would win if he had a computer. (When this opera was conceived, computers were large, expensive machines possessed by only a few corporations and institutions.) “Incomprehensible chance” intervenes when his girlfriend finds and pawns a necklace lost by Markus’s daughter. With the money thus obtained, Fernando rents a computer and sets out to test his theory at the casino. This computer, while waiting for someone to come along and use it, had out of boredom taken to composing twelve-tone music. Fernando loses until in desperation he bets on a succession of numbers derived from a computer-generated twelve-tone row, and breaks the bank. His girlfriend tries to reclaim the necklace, but Markus, who has seen it at the pawnbroker’s office and recognized it as his daughter’s, has redeemed it. The girlfriend goes to his office to plead for it, but wins his heart instead. Fernando enters, followed by the daughter, who put up the money for his last desperate gamble because she found him attractive—and because he promised to buy her an airplane. At the ending all have lost and won—by chance.

More brisk, more closely woven, more urbane and lighter in touch than the earlier comic operas, *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* has the breeziness of 23 and “Aus Gründen der Kontrolle.” Indeed, Krenek is satirizing himself, for the libretto pokes fun at some of his most serious concerns of the time: electronic music, computers, the mysterious powers of numbers signified by the matrices of serial music, and, above all, the relation between chance and determinism—the theme of *Sestina*. As Krenek points out in an essay entitled “Ausgerechnet, aber sehr verspielt” (Computed but very confounded), both the opera and *Sestina* state that the wholly determined produces the unexpected, thereby leading back to the irrational stream of life. The connection between the two works is even closer: Markus quotes from the third verse of *Sestina* in the opening lines of the opera, and the quotation is repeated at the start of the second scene. The music to which these quotations are set is derived

by rotation from the basic row of *Sestina*, as is the row invented by the computer, which serves as the basic row for the entire opera!¹⁸

Caught up in the gamesmanship of all this, Krenek decided to prepare another *sestina* on determinism and chance, in which the text would itself demonstrate their paradoxical connection. The lines would be predetermined (that is, written out), but the order of their appearance, and hence the version of the overall theme in any given instance, would be discovered by drawing numbers. He took for the tornado of the *sestina* the ending of the opera:

As they deserved, so it turned out for them.
Losing, winning—all was simply chance.
Computed, to be sure, but infatuated with gambling [chance].

Each line of the “Roulette *Sestina*,” as it was called, had its own fragment of music, so that a new musical composition was created when the numbers for the lines were drawn. Powerfully influenced at the time by John Donne, Krenek fashioned lines incorporating familiar proverbs couched in elaborate puns, double meanings, and poised antitheses. These were to be juxtaposed in unforeseeable ways that still managed to make sense and illustrate the dialectic of the poem. For example, two such lines could tease the audience with fleeting hints by conjoining in a gnomic utterance thus:

The means rule, the end serves.
We know nothing, but we have computed it.

Krenek was using blocks of words as he had used blocks of music in another “mobile,” *From Three Make Seven* (op. 177), which he composed just before beginning the opera. His essay makes plain that he found a lot of amusement in creating the *sestina*. Nevertheless, judged too difficult for a television audience, it was not used. It was presented once at a concert conducted by Krenek in Mannheim: the numbers that would organize the *sestina* and its music were plucked from a hat by a young woman from the audience, which found such flummery highly diverting.

Except for brief passages such as the instrumental prologue, the music of *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* is not serial despite the close connection with *Sestina*, but the two works are very similar in style, as the choice of instruments suggests. Krenek used only one each of the strings and winds, but to them he added two pianos, celesta, cembalo, guitar, harp, vibraphone, xylophone, glockenspiel, drums, cymbals, tam-tam, gong, tambourine, temple blocks, bongos, triangle, and rattle. Wide intervals among the tones and sudden shifts among the instruments, densities, and dynamics follow one another swiftly in the manner of his serial compositions; yet the movements to and fro are guided less by a matrix than by the natural tempo and

inflections of speech and gesture. More a play than an opera, this modest little work is one of Krenek's most pleasing.

The same cannot be said of *Der Zauberspiegel* (op. 192), a second television opera, commissioned by the state broadcasting unit in Munich. Though a more "operatic" work than *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*, *Der Zauberspiegel*, which Krenek created between 1963 and 1965, suffers from a clumsy libretto that jumbles time travel, political satire, a parody of a James Bond spy novel, sentimental romance, and Rabelaisian burlesque. Nor are any of these aspects treated in a fresh way. The humor is ponderous and predictable; what is meant to be waggish lapses into buffoonery. To make matters worse, the film of the production, which was broadcast on September 6, 1967, and December 23, 1968, was poorly photographed and edited.

In *Sardakai* (op. 206) Krenek recovered the sprightliness of *What Price Confidence?* and *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*. "I was no longer taking opera very seriously," Krenek later explained, "and I came to the conclusion that perhaps the theatre of the absurd did not have to be invented, for opera as such seemed absurd enough. In this mood I conceived . . . *Sardakai*, which was meant to be a lightweight, fluffy farce, poking fun at a few holy [sacred?] cows that happened to be standing around."¹⁹ One of the cows was opera itself, which *Sardakai* pointedly mocks in several asides; scattered through its quasi-serialistic music, moreover, are sophisticated parodies of operatic styles and quotations from *Rigoletto*, *Così fan tutte*, Gluck's *Orfeo*, and *Fidelio*—informing the audience that it should not take *Sardakai* seriously.

Krenek had been asked in 1967 by Rolf Liebermann, Rennert's replacement as director of the Hamburg State Opera as of 1959, to write a comic opera for six persons but no chorus; Liebermann anticipated doing *Così fan tutte*, and he wished to use the same personnel in a work by Krenek. Not only did Krenek agree, but he took from *Così* a secondary plot—the wager two men make regarding their ladies' fidelity—and wove it into another story line of his own devising that mocked the revolutionary spirit of the times, Hollywood, and chic soft-core pornography. But, as when he wrote *Kehraus um St. Stephan*, these were difficult times in which to attempt social and political satire, unless one shared the views of the fashionable opinion makers. The Vietnam War had brought about demonstrations, peace marches, teach-ins, and student strikes in France, Germany, and the United States. The Arab-Israeli War had broken out early in the summer of 1967 shortly before Liebermann made his suggestion, and soon thereafter came the brief "Prague spring," followed by the occupation of Czechoslovakia. Throughout Western Europe and America, many people, especially young people, were tense and angry. Derisive hooting was in; light irony that mocked human folly was out.

Light irony was just what Krenek was after in his libretto, which recounted the travels and political misfortunes of *Sardakai*, the virgin queen of Migo Migo, a

South Seas island, who comes to Europe to subdue Urumuru, the leader of a war of liberation against her rule, which he directs from a hideout in Romadra (Rome and Madrid combined). Subsequently described by Krenek as “a late teenager who had probably spent two years at Bennington [College],”²⁰ Sardakai plans to kidnap and seduce Urumuru, but things go awry when she becomes tangled in the maneuvers of a psychiatrist and a countercultural poet who are testing the fidelity of their girlfriends. She loses her virginity and her kingdom but ends up a Hollywood star, with the psychiatrist in tow as her publicity agent. Urumuru, the new dictator of Migo Migo, busily stockpiles armaments with the assistance of the poet’s ex-girlfriend, while back in Romadra the poet and the psychiatrist’s ex-girlfriend comfort each other as best they can.

In assembling this larkish nonsense Krenek looked back, without realizing it at the time, to his first and very similar attempt at light comedy, *Der Sprung über den Schatten*. Again he employed the trappings of opera buffa—disguises, mistaken identities, overheard conversations, embarrassing entrapments—and again he showed a manipulative charlatan being outwitted by a sexually aggressive woman and a melancholy poet emerging more or less unscathed from the tumult that puts a rogue at the head of the state. The influence of Kraus, who despised psychiatry as an invasion of privacy and a threat to morality, is apparent in the limning of both Dr. Berg, the “spiritualist” (a contemptuous designation for a healer) of *Der Sprung*, and the psychiatrist of *Sardakai*, though in both of Krenek’s operas the tone is nearer to Nestroy’s raillery than to Kraus’s savagery.

Amusing as it is, the opera is not as buoyant as *What Price Confidence?* and *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*. It requires a more deft touch than Krenek’s to use clichés and stereotypes and be understood as making fun of them. (He succeeded in this when treating musical clichés in *Potpourri* and *Little Symphony*.) One must create an impression of being a detached observer who with amused superiority watches the banalities unfolding on the stage in the company of a similarly superior audience, something Auden did brilliantly in his libretto for *The Rake’s Progress*. In *Sardakai* and *Der Sprung*, however, Krenek was overly inventive and worked too hard for laughs. In a hostile account of the *Sardakai* premiere, Peter Dannenberg complained: “He tried to denounce the clichés of the times but tangles himself in them instead. Persiflage is the aim of this new opera, dullest farce the outcome.”²¹

To be sure, things are not quite so bad, and despite its flaws the opera is funny. Krenek was at risk, for again he was staking his chances on his libretto and, except for the musical parodies and quotations, had reduced the music to a very subordinate role. It was still more operatic in the usual sense than the music of *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*: the orchestral interludes between scenes did somewhat foretell the moods of what followed, and in some passages the music was used as part of the characterization, as when the flowing and melodic vocal lines of the poet’s girlfriend

are contrasted with his abrasive ones. But elsewhere the music is in Krenek's postserial fidgety manner and is so separated from the libretto—while within it the vocal parts are so separated from the instrumental ones—that about all that is projected is an effect of tension and high-speed energy, both quite suited to the action but otherwise lacking in musical expressiveness and appeal. So once again the success of the work depended on its success as, essentially, a play.

It failed at the premiere on June 27, 1970, but for reasons unrelated to its intrinsic merits. The older members of the audience wanted music enjoyable for its own sake, regardless of the plot, and were offended by the explicit language. Many younger members, who might have been counted on to support a work considered radical and somewhat offensive by their elders, were outraged that Krenek made fun of political radicalism. Yet whereas Krenek had meant his satire to be general, Rudolph Heinrich, the stage designer, made it obtrusively specific. Interpreting the work as an attack on the North Vietnamese and the Cubans, Heinrich designed sets that emphasized a communist-capitalist confrontation and had Urumuru made up to resemble Fidel Castro. Krenek, insisting that as far as he was concerned one system was as bad as another and he had no intention of taking sides, had wanted to withdraw the work when he learned about Heinrich's interpretation but could not.

Liebermann assured him that no one would notice, but he was utterly wrong. Anger among young people had reached a new level of intensity. Just a few weeks earlier American troops had invaded Cambodia, precipitating a crisis. German students, already noted for their political violence, were plumbing new depths of rancor and vituperation. Word of Heinrich's treatment of *Sardakai* spread through Hamburg University, where the students in their paranoia concluded that the opera had been commissioned by the Central Intelligence Agency or President Nixon himself. At the dress rehearsal they screamed political slogans and stamped and hissed. As stories of the disturbance circulated in the city, many prepared to take sides on the opening night.

The result was a scandalous uproar. Infuriated students were supported by music lovers who simply disliked the music. Krenek was booed when he returned to conduct the second act and more loudly booed from all corners of the house when he came on stage to take bows. During the performance, the ironic comments he directed at himself and his composing in the libretto prompted the audience to jeer at him rather than laugh with him. The reminders of *Così* invited unsympathetic reviewers to make comparisons intended to be damaging to Krenek.

But *Sardakai* also had its supporters. Cliques to drown out the boos with cheers were organized. The popular newspaper *Bild* called it excellent entertainment and gave it six stars, its highest rating. People came to see for themselves what the commotion was all about. Then the excitement died down and the audiences thinned. Directors of other opera houses, influenced perhaps by the similarity between the behavior of the students and hooliganism of the Nazis at performances

of *Mahagonny* and *Jonny*, did not take it up, and it was not revived at Hamburg. While far from one of Krenek's important works, it deserved a kinder fate.

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Recounting his displeasure with *Sardakai*, Peter Dannenberg said that Krenek had given warning six years earlier of what to expect of him when he outraged Hamburg with *Der goldene Bock* (The golden ram, op. 186). Obviously, Dannenberg conceded, when one asks a composer of Krenek's stature to undertake an opera, one must produce it. But was it wise, after the negative popular and critical response to *Der goldene Bock*, to let Krenek fashion his own libretto for *Sardakai* while so far away in California? An opera director has no control over the music of a commissioned work, but he might have some influence on the nature of the libretto. Someone, Dannenberg wrote, should have collaborated with Krenek and spared him public ridicule, especially in his seventieth year. In Dannenberg's opinion Hamburg would have done him far more justice by staging *Karl V*.

As was noted in Chapter 11, *Der goldene Bock* was, like the later *Sardakai*, the result of overtures in late 1961 from Rolf Liebermann, who was looking for a contemporary work with which to inaugurate Hamburg's new opera house. In the ensuing correspondence, Krenek told Liebermann that he was thinking about a subject that had appealed to him as far back as 1924, "a completely fantastic and particularly surrealistic treatment of the Argonaut legend wherein time and space are freely roamed and the fleece is brought to America." He had not known how to develop the idea, just as in 1928, when working on *Leben des Orest*, he had not known how to bring Orestes to America during the search for his sister. He now believed that a surrealistic treatment of ancient legends would fit well into the theater of Brecht, Genet, and Ionesco, and he suggested that they discuss the idea when he came to Europe that summer. This they did, reaching an agreement in Hamburg on September 13, 1962. Krenek was given a completely free hand and at once began sketching his most ambitious work since *Karl V*, one that would far exceed the scope of *Pallas Athene weint*. Before the turn of the year he sent a preliminary version to an approving Liebermann, and on January 1, 1963, he began composing the music, which he finished exactly six months later, with the orchestration completed the following November. As with *Sardakai*, all the work was done in California.²²

Liebermann's enthusiasm, the multilayered possibilities for action and meaning inherent in travel across great reaches of time and space, and the superb equipment of the Hamburg Opera House encouraged Krenek to go all out with some long-standing interests and some new enthusiasms, to the initial dismay of Egon Monk, who would be the stage director. From the past he brought his predilection for making indirect social commentary by means of comparisons between the present and earlier times, as in *Leben des Orest* and (by implication) *Pallas Athene weint*; his

interest in film techniques (which with the Hamburg stage machinery he would be able to emulate); and his preoccupation with puns, puzzles, anagrams, and parodies. He also brought various lifelong influences: Cocteau's whimsical fantasies; the revues of the Folies Bergère, which would have a direct effect on the episodic organization of the work; and, more strongly than in any other work for nearly thirty years, Kraus's rage against the morals of contemporary society. From his recent enthusiasms he took the themes of chance and determinism and the mysterious nature of time, the serial technique and stylistic features associated with these, his experiences with electronic music, his recent conclusion that serious matters cannot be treated seriously in opera, and his tendency to elevate the dialogue and action of an opera far above its music. All of these, of course, had affected earlier works. What was new here was that they were being gathered into a single entity, giving it a range and diversity that threatened to make it unmanageable. As far back as the Second Symphony Adorno had perceived an element of wildness in Krenek's works. This work would be the wildest of them all.

Further encouragement came from his correspondence with the learned and witty Werner Batschelet-Massini, who relished every oddity, the more far-fetched the better. A professor of classics at the University of Basel and an enthusiastic amateur pianist, Batschelet-Massini was well informed about contemporary music. He had, for example, acquired and analyzed the recent works of Boulez, whose lectures he had attended; he had also taken unusual pleasure in *Sestina*. He and Krenek first met in the late fifties and were drawn to each other by their many common interests. In 1960 Krenek composed a serial piano duet for Batschelet-Massini and a physician friend, *Basler Massarbeit* (Basel made-to-measure), op. 173—a pun on the fact that the work required complicated time measurements for its performance.

It was not so much his knowledge of modern music and the classics that made Batschelet-Massini important in the genesis of the opera, though Krenek did seek his advice about versions of the Jason-and-Medea story, which he had chosen for it; rather, Batschelet-Massini's fascination with numerology and wordplay of all kinds was the key. For years he had been engaged in a study of legends involving labyrinths; he liked to speculate about the relation of mathematics to the fine arts; and he filled his letters to Krenek with descriptions of permutations, combinations, and stochastic variables. From all this Krenek took only a few facts: that in one version of the Argonaut legend Jason is swallowed and then spat out by a dragon, and that "Jason" can be anagrammatically converted to "Jonas," thereby linking two dis-gorgement stories, and "Jonas" converted into "Sonja," a name that Krenek worked into his libretto. Perhaps what counted most was Batschelet-Massini's exuberance, which stimulated a recklessness in Krenek. *Der goldene Bock* might have been very different without the influence of Batschelet-Massini's playful yet intensely academic intelligence.

By omitting some details, such as Jason's dalliance with Hypsipyle on the island

of Lemnos, and combining others, as when he made Glaukis the daughter of Pelias and the person who assisted Medea in murdering him, Krenek managed to squeeze the story of the fleece, to which he added some details of his own for the sake of satirizing modern follies, into four huge acts.

His version begins when Nephele, the former wife of Athamas, king of Jolkos, and the creator of the golden ram, sends the ram off bearing her son and daughter on a journey through time and space to save them from Ino, Athamas's second wife. Ino then creates the *Argo*, a ship so laden with technological wonders that it can both talk and sail across millennia and hemispheres, and Jason embarks on it to bring back the ram. Nephele's daughter falls into the sea, but her son is carried into the twentieth century and comes to earth in the American Southwest on land belonging to the Inote Indians. Their chief, Chattahoochie (the modern equivalent of the legend's King Aetes), immediately sees that the ram will make a good tourist attraction, but Nephele's son, following her orders, sacrifices it—for which the Indians shoot him. Chattahoochie then adds its fleece to a roadside exhibit that already includes Medea, who has been reduced to a stuffed dragon. The *Argo* arrives with Jason, with whom the dragon at once falls in love. Transfigured by love into a beautiful Indian girl, Medea helps Jason regain the fleece and escape in a stolen pickup truck, taking Chattahoochie's son with them as a hostage. Chattahoochie sets out in pursuit on a motorcycle; to divert his attention, Medea chops up his son and throws pieces of his body out of the truck.

After an interval during which Medea bears two sons, she and Jason arrive at the Florida beach house of a Greek shipowner who is, in fact, Pelias, Ino's conniving brother from Jolkos. Medea, whom he hopes to seduce, persuades Pelias to allow himself to be cut into small pieces so that he can be boiled in a magical brew, which, she assures him, will endow him with eternal youth. Having disposed of him, she turns her attention to Glaukis, with whom Jason has fallen in love, and burns her to death. Medea then changes back into a dragon and eats her children. Jason is arrested on suspicion of murder and deported to Greece when no bodies can be found. Upon his arrival there a customs officer confiscates the fleece and by coincidence throws this "old goat skin" into a bin situated on the very spot where the ram was created. Jason drops dead and rejoins his relatives in Hades, where little has changed, for even Pelias has returned. Time has run backward into eternity, where, as there is no time, nothing can happen.

The ending, like everything else in Krenek's treatment, such as sending Jason off in the *Argo* alone rather than as the leader of a force that included such mighty Argonauts such as Theseus, Orpheus, Heracles, and Nestor, is intended to emphasize the *unheroic*, meaningless—in a word, absurd—nature of life in ancient Greece and, we are to presume, contemporary America. Things, we are to understand, are the same in all times and places.

To match the immense size and technical resources of the Hamburg stage, Krenek

mustered a cast of twenty-eight plus chorus and full orchestra, to which he added a piano, an electric guitar, and an array of percussion instruments equal that which he had assembled for *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* three years earlier. But he rarely used more than a few of his sound sources at any given time because some of the passages are in strict serialism, and the remainder, except for a few brief intervals in which more conventional musical treatment is introduced for the sake of ironic contrast, are in the sparse quasi-serial style of the television opera. The strict serialism occurs at the points of time travel, as when Jason, having evaded the Symplegades, sets sail for America. In his program notes for the Hamburg production, Krenek explained:

Where time and space are skipped over, the music is subject to comprehensive serial predetermination, i.e., successions and durations of pitches are preconceived, in order to make the music at such points sound properly chaotic, occasionally shaky, oblique, rhythmically out of joint—as if one had drawn diagonals through time (you don't have to visualize this particularly clearly). This I meant when in 1957 I wrote in my "Sestina":

As I with measure conquer sound and time,
shape recedes in unmeasured chance.
Crystal of number releases the stream of life.

Yet despite this concurrence of musical format with dramatic events and such ingenuities as using a retrograde version of the tone row where time is running backward, Krenek—as far as audience perceptions are concerned—put a greater distance between the music and the libretto than in any other of his operas. Speech, in essence, remains speech, greatly emphasized by the wide tonal intervals, the leaps, the sudden shifts of dynamics, the constant alteration among the simultaneously sounding, brittlely percussive instruments. Occasionally the music has a contextualizing effect on the drama, as when Jason and Medea are escaping and Jason, at the wheel of the pickup truck and unaware of Medea's butchery in the back, sings a jaunty line in which he boasts of having the fleece—"O heroic life!" His words and the music, grotesquely at odds with Medea's savagery, project a brutal irony. But otherwise the music is so independent that its emphases could almost be achieved by beating on a set of untuned drums. What is more, despite the care with which Krenek organized the unusually intricate structure of the music, to the inexperienced listener the music soon begins to sound the same throughout and, over the great length of the work, becomes wearying. This effect, it could be argued, is not out of keeping with an antiromantic opera and an antihero, but neither is it a strong inducement to liking the work.

Despite Krenek's dislike of Bertolt Brecht's ideas about opera, here is an opera with a libretto that might almost have been conceived by Brecht himself. For in it

we find Brecht's emphases on money lust, on the use of sex to gain power and control, on the greed and boredom in the lives of ordinary people. Here are tragic horrors made "humorously" grotesque. Here is the deliberate disappointing of the audience's hopes of being entertained with the heroic images and action. Here are Brecht's *Tafeln*—signs placed above the stage to indicate the location of the action and to force the audience to realize that it is viewing an artificial construction rather than something with which it should identify, something in which to lose itself, and by this *Verfremdungseffekt* (estranging or distancing effect) to compel it to think with detachment about what is being presented. Monk, the stage director, had studied under Brecht and understood Krenek's objectives exactly. Although he had been alarmed at first by Krenek's plans, he was cooperative in every respect, patiently going over each step to ensure that he got things right. Never before or since did Krenek have such sympathetic support. Between them they agreed on a Brechtian bareness for the stage and a minimum of sets, both for distancing and to enable scenes to shift with cinematic swiftness.

If ever, from the creator's point of view, an opera should succeed, it was now. Krenek had invested *Der goldene Bock* with a wealth of invention, much of it comical, and had treated a familiar legend in a brand new way. The music was as ingenious as any he had ever conceived. The work was staged with imagination and great technical resourcefulness.

Despite all this, the Hamburg audience found the opera tedious and disagreeable. Even so staunch an admirer as Heinz Joachim, who had praised *Pallas Athene weint*, disliked it. Writing in *Die Welt* following the June 19, 1964, premiere, he said that not only was the opera much too long, but well before its end Krenek's "ambiguous metaphysical conceits . . . faded into macabre farce and eccentric frivolity" to which the wearying musical style offered no relief. If such a loyalist felt this way, it is not surprising that the audience was hostile. Attendance fell so much that Liebermann was forced to cut short the number of performances. At this writing it has not been revived.

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Looking across the five decades between *Die Zwingburg* and *Sardakiai*, one perceives in all of Krenek's operas (except *Bluff* and *Cefalo e Procri*) a cluster of interwoven character types, themes, and controlling ideas that appear and reappear, whether the libretti are his own or the work of others. Such recurrence is not a matter of happenstance in the instances of *Die Zwingburg* and *Tarquin*, owing to Krenek's close collaboration with Demuth and Lavery, or in the instance of *Orpheus und Eurydike*, owing to Krenek's and Kokoschka's having come from the same intellectual milieu. Taking them all together, one glimpses beneath the operas a shadowy Ur-text.

Foremost among the characters is the attractive, aggressive, and somewhat evasive

woman. Anita of *Jonny* and Sardakai are the most vivid embodiments, but even the chastened and compliant Eleanore of *Karl V* fits this pattern when she falls in love with King Francis. The very opposite are the men: the passive, meditative, self-doubting loners such as Max (*Jonny*), Thoas (*Leben des Orest*), and Karl. Sometimes two of these two figures are involved in a triangle with a third recurring type: swaggering, unthinking, self-confident tyrants and bullies such as Daniello (*Jonny*), the protagonist of *The Dictator*, Lavery's Tarquin, and both Alkibiades and the King of Sparta (*Pallas Athene weint*). Still another type consists of mischief-makers whose lineage goes back through the operettas of Offenbach and the farces of Nestroy to Plautus and Terence and the legends of shape-shifters. Like Jonny, the preeminent example among Krenek's personae, these are creatures of whim and impulse, and most—Dr. Berg and Odette (*Sprung über den Schatten*) or Dr. Adriano (*Sardakai*)—practice intrigue and deception as much for fun as for gain; even though he is based on a historical personage, Francis I (*Karl V*) belongs here, too. Finally, there are the figures out of opera buffa: the dolts who bluster, blunder, and lose their women—Prince Kuno (*Sprung*), the champion boxer (*Schwerengewicht*), and Jason, the legendary hero as buffoon (*Goldener Bock*). To be sure, not all of the characters fit neatly into these categories. Daniello is a rogue as well as a tyrant; Karl, despite a fundamental passivity, is forced by his responsibilities to lead the life of a man of action; and Dr. Adriano is as much a dolt as a rogue. And here and there are characters who come close but do not quite fit any of the types: Luther, for example, resembles the tyrants, but the German generals around him are more nearly such; Sokrates, though a man of thought, is not in the least passive or self-doubting.

These personae, which carry over from one opera to the next, enact recurring themes, but *not* the ones most favored by librettists traditionally: patriotism compromised by sexual desire (Eleanore is not disloyal, and patriotism does not figure in the passion of Timaea for Alkibiades); the ineluctable doom of sensitivity and beauty, usually beset by illness and poverty; the poet as outcast and martyr (in *Sprung* and *Sardakai* Krenek ridicules those who would like to be so regarded); the triumph of justice over false charges; parental opposition to young love; and the confrontations of princes (the conflicts between Karl and Luther and between Karl and Clement VII are not of this order because they are conducted through agents). Adultery, another favorite theme, does figure in *Schwerengewicht*, *What Price Confidence?* and *Pallas*, but only incidentally. Krenek was disinclined to treat sex seriously, even though sexuality is the source of energy and cleverness in the vital women characters such as Anita. Even in *The Dictator*, where the principal theme is freedom, Maria's unconsummated seduction serves simply to illustrate the brutal force of the tyrant.

As Krenek pointed out, the yearning for freedom appears in all of his operas. Sometimes, as in *Die Zwingburg*, the first, and *Sardakai*, the last, the goal is political freedom. Elsewhere it is freedom from inhibitions, from the "shadows" over which

one must contrive to leap. "This idea," Krenek remarked in 1970 concerning *Der Sprung über den Schatten*, "has haunted me through all my adult life, for I have always entertained the wish and hope that I could rearrange some traits of my personality."²³ How urgently he desired this is apparent in passages of the journal he kept when he first came to the United States, where he lamented his shyness and the limit it placed on his career.

Another recurring theme involves the threat to both political and inner freedom created by ambitious egocentrics' pursuit of power. Sometimes they seek it so that they can force others to submit to their will; it is this, rather than the acquisition of riches, that drives the dictator, Agamemnon, Tarquin, Alkibiades, and Urumuru. Sometimes they seek it on behalf of a vision, as do Luther, Bannadonna (the master builder of *The Bell Tower*), or, in a comic vein, Fernando with his dream of mastering chance and beating the roulette wheel.

Entirely opposite is the theme of the abandonment of power by contemplative men who long to withdraw from the world, as do the king of *The Secret Kingdom*, Karl before his great task is completed, and Max when he feels the lure of the glaciers. As they meditate, they illustrate another theme: the disabling effect of thought, which in them so easily turns into self-depreciation and melancholy. Yet vivacious Anita falls in love with Max; and Ginette, the chic aviatrix of *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*, is attracted by Fernando, who, though not as contemplative a man as the others are, is in a sense withdrawing into his obsession with numbers.

These women's behavior illustrates yet another recurring theme: the ambivalence of women who, though intrigued by both the oppressive men of action and the passive men of thought, prefer the latter when put to a choice. Perhaps the men of thought are easier marks for them—which brings us to the final and withal most fundamental of Krenek's themes: the dominance, for good or ill, of women over men. Only in *The Dictator*, *Karl V*, and *Pallas* is the course of events *not* determined by women, and in the first two of these women are far superior in humanity to the men who overpower them.

Immanent among these characters and themes are dominant ideas that give form and substance to a vision of life. In his program notes for the Wiesbaden and Kassel theaters Krenek argued that the very plenitude in opera prevents any real exploration of ideas: there is so much for the audience to attend to that even the most profound conceptions can be presented in only the broadest terms. Later, when the ideas in *Karl V* were so important for him that he wanted their exposition to have the utmost clarity, he reduced the impingements on the audience's attention by using speech in the critical passages. But this and his subsequent reduction of the role of music did not greatly alter matters; in the end, he concluded that ideas simply could not be treated seriously in opera. Ideas are present in opera, of course, regardless of a librettist's intentions; but however significant the themes may be, however stirring the treatment of them, the inherent ideas in them are inevitably subjected to a

reductive process that makes them almost, if not outright, platitudinous. As a result, it is easy erroneously to suppose that when it comes to ideas librettists are ingenuous and naive—as some may have been. But this is scarcely true of, say, Da Ponte, Boito, Auden, or Krenek.

Foremost among the ideas presented in his operas is that of the superiority of feeling over thought. The wholly contemplative life is no life at all: one acts to live. But action in pursuit of an abstract ideal divorced from feeling is more deadly than the paralysis brought on by excessive thought, for it leads to destruction and death. Women, Krenek's libretti suggest, are superior to men because they are more in touch with their feelings; they may at times seem irrational, even less intelligent, but they are wiser about life and its priorities and thus more realistic, practical, and effective. The intelligence of men, by contrast, actually makes them liable to become befuddled by abstractions; less close than women to the origins of life, they can be seduced by ambition into criminality, their rationality serving evil ends.

Krenek's ideas about women are in keeping with the Viennese obsession with the *Ewig-weibliche*, which, as we have seen, Krenek first encountered in his mid-teens in Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*. That book, either directly or through its effect on the immediate climate of opinion during his formative years, had a powerful influence, which was enhanced by his reading of *Die Fackel*.^{*} Kraus, who admired Weininger, agreed in perceiving Woman as a totally sexual being: everything she is and does goes back ultimately to her sexuality. Where reason gives Man some control over his feelings, Woman is too irrational to have any. As Weininger put it:

Woman is neither high-minded nor low-minded, strong-minded or weak-minded. She is the opposite of all these. Mind cannot be predicated of her at all; she is mindless. That, however, does not imply weakmindedness in the ordinary sense of the word, the absence of capacity to "get her bearings" in ordinary, everyday life. Cunning, calculation, "cleverness," are much more usual and constant in the woman than in the man, if there is a personal, selfish end in view. A woman is never so stupid as a man can be. . . .

Woman is engrossed exclusively by sexuality, not intermittently, but throughout her life. . . . The idea of pairing [i.e., sexual union] is the only conception which has positive worth for women. The woman is the bearer of the thought of the continuity of the species. . . .

One of the deepest problems of woman [is] her absolute duplicity. Her pairing instinct and her duplicity . . . must be explained together.²⁴

As a consequence, Weininger concluded, Woman is the source of all the evil in the world, which originates in her deceitful, irrational sexuality, whereas Man is the source of all that is positive. But here Kraus disagreed, for Kraus believed (as summarized by Janik and Toulmin) that "the emotional essence of woman is not

^{*}He was not influenced in the least degree by Weininger's morbid anti-Semitism, which the Nazis later seized upon, calling Weininger "the wisest Jew" and saying that he did the logical thing in committing suicide.

wanton or nihilistic, but rather is a tender *fantasy* which serves as the unconscious origin of all that has any worth in human experience. Herein lies the source of all inspiration and creativity. . . . Reason must be supplied with proper goals from the outside; it must be given direction of a moral or aesthetic type. The feminine fantasy fecundates the moral reason and gives it that direction. . . . The feminine is the source of all that is civilizing in society."²⁵ Writing in 1937 on the influence of the concept of the *Ewig-weibliche* on Alban Berg's opera *Lulu*, Krenek confirmed the deep impression made by Weininger on his own generation and described what the concept meant to Kraus, with whom he agreed:

[It] is the mysterious center of man's nature—but it is also the purest expression of the original divine principle, undisguised essence, the principal order before the Fall, the real likeness of God. This automatically puts the male world of wanting and doing into a dialectical relationship with this Ur-nature; it becomes the central principle of the Fall, of ambiguous thought and intellectualism, which must be paid for with punishment and repentance. The repentance produces the creative principle of male organization, demonstrated most clearly in the act of artistic construction.²⁶

Human beings yearn for freedom, but men, in their "wanting and doing" to obtain that freedom, taste power and become tyrants. Revolutions, Krenek believed, end not in liberty but in oppression, and the masses are ineffective against this turn of events, for they are easily controlled by fear and sensuality. Although he professed a political radicalism ("In my adolescence," he remarked in 1970, "I developed strong sympathies for left and far left causes, and I have retained them to this day"),²⁷ this stand was in fact an expression of his dislike for the tastes and institutions of the bourgeoisie, not of sympathy with the lower classes. Krenek was, after all, a reserved and fastidious elitist by temperament. Even his nationalistic activism of the thirties showed this: though interested in Austrian folk and folkways, he was moved less by any true sense of kinship with his countrymen than by a detestation of the swinish Nazis. His real attitude is shown in his depictions of the drunken rioting of the populace in *The Secret Kingdom* after they have overthrown their gentle king and replaced him with a bully, the similarly drunken rioting of the hordes around the bier of Agamemnon after they have killed Elektra in *Leben des Orest*, the representation of Karl's soldiers as like a great animal that slips its leash during the pillaging of Rome, and the behavior of the Athenians who spit on Sokrates and cheer as he is led to his death in *Pallas Athene weint*.

What, then, is the Ur-text beneath the web formed by these characters, themes, and ideas? It is simply Life against Death, embodied in Woman against Man. Nowhere explicitly stated, this ultimate theme may be found, nonetheless, in the depths of the libretti. Humankind wants liberty and a carefree, unreflective life, but men, if they are not restrained by women, only enslave and destroy the human community or withdraw from it into a frozen realm of noumena. Whichever they choose, they

pit themselves against humankind, and the end is death. But women, when they dominate through an exuberance of sexual energy, seek not to defeat or conquer men but only to preserve life: they are for humankind. They see through the pomp of militarism and the authoritarian state. They pity the self-tormenting brooders and try to entice them into bold, self-confident living. Whether impish or earnest, whether slyly manipulative or forcibly direct, they try to turn men away from tyranny and death toward true liberty and life. What Janik and Toulmin said in their summary of Kraus's thought applies with equal cogency to Krenek's Ur-text: "The emotional essence of woman . . . serves as the unconscious origin of all that has any worth in human experience."

. . .

How well in nearly fifty years of endeavor did Krenek fare in musical drama? When that question is asked about other composers associated with operas, operettas, or revues, people tend to think first and perhaps only of the music. But because Krenek deliberately shifted the focus of attention from the music to the drama, perhaps it is appropriate to begin by gauging his achievements as a librettist.

In that, he was better at inventing incidents and stage business than characterization. Allowance must be made for the limits of the medium, but one wishes he had penetrated his introspective men more deeply. Karl is an exception, Sokrates somewhat less so. Krenek skillfully used the device of the confessional to suggest the complexity of Karl's nature, and by emphasizing Sokrates' role as mentor he provided occasions for the character to expound his philosophy. But we learn little about Max, the king of *The Secret Kingdom*, or Thoas. Karl and Sokrates apart, Krenek does best with rogues and vivacious women. They amuse him, and his amusement is infectious. Amused in our turn, we do not wish for more. In general, he is more effective when mocking people who take themselves seriously (Max, Urumuru, the poets of *Sprung* and *Santakai*) than when seeking to persuade us to take seriously the ones he meant to be so perceived (the artists of *The Bell Tower* and *Der Zauberspiegel*, the lovers of *Dark Waters*). His comic libretti emphasize situations, and his inventiveness endows the best of these with briskness and vivid scenic possibilities. He excels in the lighthearted nonsense that Offenbach treated so well and Kraus delighted in reading.

Sometimes his inventiveness got the better of him: *Sprung* has *two* saucy young women, *two* con men, while the laborious Indian sequence of *Der goldene Bock*, though it parallels the Aeetes portion of the Jason legend, seems in the context of the opera to be forced by Krenek's fascination with the notion of time travel. He also missed a number of opportunities to increase dramatic tension and tighten the overall symmetry and unity. For example, Max and Daniello never meet, as they should, being rivals for the favors of Anita; and Jonny and Max, embodying the polarities of the opera's action and characterizations, are never aware of each other.

Dramatically, if not historically, the conflict between Karl and Luther, who meet only once, deserves more attention in view of the titanic forces gathered behind them and the significance of their religious and political differences. Still, when Krenek kept his imagination in check and restrained his weakness for gimmicks such as a talking ship, his libretti move with admirable pace and momentum, as in the final scene of *Jonny* and the entire *What Price Confidence?* which is a jewel of neatly poised, complementary actions. Together with *Schwergewicht*, *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*, and *Sardakai*, these operas suggest that Krenek did best as librettist when fashioning comedies constrained by overall length, number of characters, and number of scenes.

As many an opera shows, great music can carry a weak text, charging it with energy, endowing it with coherence and unity, and persuading us to suspend disbelief in, or even criticism of, what may amount to silliness on a truly heroic scale. It can even imbue stock characters with individuality and substance, as Berg demonstrated in his treatment of Marie in *Wozzeck*. Krenk had claimed that music placed opera at the summit when it came to illuminating human experience, and he sacrificed a great deal in reducing the function of music in his operas after *Pallas Athene weint*, especially as this later music did not “probe into the deeper intellectual strata of the theme treated.” *Orpheus und Eurydike*, *Leben des Orest*, *Karl V*, and *Pallas Athene weint* prove that he could attain the highest degree of expressiveness, even when hampered by libretti as muddily mystical as *Orpheus* or as unwieldy as *Orest*. These operas deserve a place beside the best of the century and should be far better known and more frequently performed than they are.

As for the rest, it is difficult to foretell what may become of them. *Jonny* has such a niche in the history of twentieth-century opera and is so entertaining that it is likely to be revived from time to time, even though, as a *Zeitoper*, it is now long out of date. So, too, are the engaging *Schwergewicht* and *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* and, to a lesser degree, *Sardakai*; as time passes, the likelihood of their being brought back diminishes. *What Price Confidence?* is a stylish period piece and thus, unlike *Zeitopern*, invulnerable to obsolescence. Since it costs little to produce, it may be revived by small companies and opera workshops. Prospects for the remainder are less encouraging, although with judicious cutting *Der goldene Bock* might do well.

This chapter opened by stating that at present Krenek is thought of as a composer of operas who wrote other music. That is how we tend to remember Wagner and Verdi, and rightly so. But in time Krenek may be perceived the other way around, as are Stravinsky and Schönberg. He may be remembered as the composer of magnificent orchestral works, chamber music, choral music, and piano and vocal music who in addition wrote several of the finest operas of our time.

13 · INTIMATIONS OF MORTALITY AND A LATE HARVEST: 1970 – 1984

Berta Krenek, who still lived in Los Angeles, had kept on good terms with her former husband. He and Gladys visited her regularly, and she followed closely the progress of his musical fortunes. A great admirer of the German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, she thought he ought to sing some of Krenek's songs or even that Krenek should compose something for him. On her urging Krenek wrote to Fischer-Dieskau early in 1970, asking how it was that he had never used any Krenek material. Fischer-Dieskau replied at once, saying that it was a matter of pure chance that Krenek's songs, which he admired, had never been subjected to his "weak endeavors." This situation could be remedied, however, for he was preparing an evening of contemporary songs. Did Krenek have anything to propose? Perhaps even a first performance? He closed by saying that it would give him great pleasure to make Krenek's acquaintance.¹

There the matter remained until November 1971, when Krenek offered to compose a song cycle for Fischer-Dieskau, who at once gave enthusiastic assent. He regarded the text as critical and suggested that Krenek seek one among the poems of Friedrich Hölderlin or the neglected lyrics of Nietzsche. He added that it would be delightful to make a recording of Krenek songs without regard for commercial considerations; perhaps they could discuss this when he came to Los Angeles the following April.² (Nothing came of the recording idea.)

They met at the Bel Air Hotel on April 29, 1972. By June Krenek had decided to write his own text for the cycle, in which he intended to make a major statement about himself. He chose the title, *Spätlese*, for its literal meaning, "late harvest," used to designate wine made from grapes gathered late in the season when frost threatens. He also had in mind a pun on *Lesen* (reading) and, lest the pun be overlooked, created the neologism *Spätschreiben* (late writing) for composing. Late wine is pre-

cious but at risk; late composing is also precious, for it is full of wisdom but also at risk—from death and from rejection by those who find it unpalatable. Fischer-Dieskau approved this plan. As his appearances for 1973 were already booked, the premiere of the cycle would take place in 1974, to be followed by a performance at that year's Berlin Festival. He said that he would be greatly honored if Krenek would be his accompanist.³

Working at home in Palm Springs during the winter of 1972–1973, Krenek prepared for his text a dramatic soliloquy in six parts that dwelt on his loneliness, his fear that his creative vitality might decline, his sense of being, paradoxically, both esteemed and ridiculed by younger composers (how the Darmstadt episode still rankled!), his doubts about the value of life, and his hope of future recognition. He composed the music between April and August 1973 in the village of Caslano on Lake Lugano, taking time out for trips to Vienna to make a new television film and to Graz to oversee preparations for a revival of *Orpheus und Eurydike*. The premiere of *Spätlese*, with Krenek at the piano, took place at the Munich Summer Opera Festival and was an unqualified success. There followed performances at Luzern, Edinburgh, and Berlin, all of which were well received. Fischer-Dieskau's singing, exceptional in its eloquence and understanding, brought out the passionate expressiveness of a work that is easily one of Krenek's finest. The singer, who was well read, knew the poetic tradition in which the text was rooted, and he also sought Krenek's advice on performance. His whole approach, Krenek reflected afterward, was "absolutely perfect."

The work was so intense that audiences were deeply moved even if they did not fully comprehend the autobiographical allusions. Krenek had prepared his text during a period of stocktaking similar to the days at Vassar when he brooded in his journal about his obscurity, and to the later days when he tried in *Selbstdarstellung* to account for the vagaries of his career. Past seventy and compelled to confront the fact that many program managers and conductors, such as Zubin Mehta, then of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, no longer considered him representative of the new music, Krenek was becoming engrossed, first, with the neglect of his music and, second, with his now being undeniably old.

In the fall of 1968, for example, the Warsaw Festival of the ISCM, the most comprehensive such occasion in many years, had presented music by Boulez, Stockhausen, Ligeti, Berio, Maderna, Cage, Penderecki, Xenakis, Blomdahl, Erickson, and Roger Reynolds. And not just were such younger men represented, for there were also works by Webern, Messiaen, Babbitt, and Eisler. But there was nothing by Krenek. As he pointed out to Friedrich Sartor of Universal Edition a few months before the premiere of *Spätlese*, statistics showed that recent years had seen many more performances of music by other composers more or less of his generation, such as Milhaud and Frank Martin, than by himself, and that among his works it was the *Spielstücke*—the little concerti, suites, and such—that were played.⁴ This

especially troubled him because he now felt that he might not have many years left in which to augment his stature with new works.

For a *memento mori* he needed only to remember friends and peers now gone: Schnabel, Erdmann, Gubler, Antheil, Hindemith, Poulenc, Scherchen, and Stravinsky. And shortly before he began work on the text of *Spätlese* his mother died in Vienna on July 15, 1972, at the age of ninety-two. Alert and indefatigable to the end, she had followed his career closely, attending every performance of his music that she could reach and writing faithfully. Through good times and bad she had always been there for him. Like Emy Rubensohn and Irene Erdmann, she was a most gallant lady.

Yet although his music was neglected, he had not been forgotten or lacking in honors. In 1960, it will be remembered, he had received the Silver Medal of Austria and the Gold Medal of Vienna. In 1965 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of New Mexico and appointed composer-in-residence at Dartmouth College. In 1966 he received the Bach Prize of the city of Hamburg and in 1970 the Ring of Honor (Ehrenring) of Vienna. The greatest honor was to come on October 2, 1975, when he received the Cross of Austria (Ehrenzeichen für Wissenschaft und Kunst), the nation's highest award. This was to be followed in 1978 by the Gold Medal of the state of Hesse. And even though he was overlooked by ISCM, his music did not go unheard, for he was the featured composer at the annual Fall Festival (Steirischer Herbst) in Graz in 1969 and 1970. Thereafter came festivals in 1974 at California State University, Northridge, where Beverly (Pinsky) Grigsby taught; in 1975 in Palm Springs, which was at last becoming aware of his presence; and, also in 1975, in Minneapolis–St. Paul. For the Berlin Festival of 1975 Krenek received a commission for a work honoring his seventy-fifth birthday and the festival's twenty-fifth anniversary for which he composed *Feiertags-Kantate* (Anniversary cantata), op. 221.

In the United States, the distinction of doing the most to celebrate this important year went to Portland, Oregon, where Stefan Minde, director of the Portland Opera, conducted a superb production of *Leben des Orest*. Minde had first presented this opera in Wiesbaden in 1961; he was twenty-five at the time, and this was his first experience directing a musical drama. Ever since he had wanted to do it again, and he was so intense and determined that he managed to overcome the resistance of the board of directors, who foresaw disaster. To their delighted amazement it turned into a triumph. Audiences were enthusiastic, and the production received unusually positive notices, both from local reviewers and from such influential outsiders as Martin Bernheimer of the *Los Angeles Times* and Andrew Porter, of *The New Yorker*. Krenek thought that the tone of the orchestra was "astonishingly beautiful," the chorus excellent, and the soloists, who sang in English, outstanding. He himself spoke about the opera to an attentive gathering, and there were recitals of his music elsewhere in the city, making this, too, in effect a Krenek festival.

Anticipating Krenek's eightieth year, the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California presented during the week of April 8–15, 1979, the most comprehensive Krenek festival ever undertaken in the United States. Organized by Michael Ingham, a young baritone in the music department, the program included papers by musicologists Ernst Hilmar from Vienna and Claudia Maurer Zenck from West Berlin, an informal talk on *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* by the composer Peter Racine Fricker, and generally excellent performances of works from all periods of Krenek's career. Highlights included presentation of an important new work, *The Dissembler*, op. 229 (composed for Ingham), the playing of his string quartets by the dedicated young members of the Thouvenel Quartet, and an exceptionally intelligent and musical performance of *Sestina* by Constance Navratil and a chamber group led by Krenek. Otherwise, however, this significant year passed virtually unnoticed in Krenek's adopted country, despite letters written by his admirers urging opera companies, conductors of major orchestras, and leading soloists to include something of his in their programs for 1980.

Europe did better. An excellent concert version of *Karl V* graced the Salzburg Festival. In Alpach, in the Tirol, where an internationally prestigious group that included Moshe Dayan had gathered for an annual symposium, Krenek's music was featured for four days, one of which was his birthday. During a recital on that day, Franz Willnauer delivered a eulogy in which he called Krenek that most contemporary of composers because he had participated in all the movements of his time. The eulogy opened with an apt quotation from *Spätlese*: "He sits alone over the old wine"—apt because his contemporaneity had brought Krenek both honor and neglect. Like his mentor Karl Kraus, Willnauer said, Krenek set a standard opposed to mediocrity and was made to suffer accordingly.

The year was capped by Fischer-Dieskau's dramatic performance of *The Dissembler* at the Berlin Festival and by the Graz Festival, which again was devoted to Krenek. There the program was extensive and varied: a group of younger West German and Austrian scholars headed by Otto Kolleritsch and Claudia Maurer Zenck presented papers in which the perspective ranged from *Reisebuch* and *Jonny* to *Spätlese*; *Jonny* itself was performed by a company from Vienna, where it had been produced earlier in the year; the entire *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* was performed, the singers overcoming the difficulties of maintaining accurate pitch by unobtrusively sounding tuning forks while the music was in progress; the orchestra of Austria's national radio and television network gave a robust first Austrian performance—nearly six decades after it was composed—of the Second Symphony; *The Bell Tower* was presented in concert form; Michael Ingham gave the first Austrian performance of *The Dissembler*; and other works from the twenties to the present were heard. In all, this was the most comprehensive offering of Krenek's music ever.

Throughout 1980 Krenek was the subject of articles that summarized his career and generally echoed Willnauer's eulogy, particularly his observation that Krenek

was both honored and neglected. But Albert Dümmling, writing in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Sonntagsblatt* on the day after Krenek's birthday, took a different line in an article entitled "Ein Komponist zwischen den Stilen" (A composer between styles). Krenek, he said, often appeared to feel that he was insufficiently appreciated, and in *Spätlese* had given way to self-pity. But, pampered by early success, Krenek had moved away from the German audience (never mind that Krenek's music had in fact been banned in Germany), partly because of his removal to America. "Krenek," he went on, "has never actually returned to our consciousness: neither the revival of earlier pieces nor premieres such as [those of] the operas *Der goldene Bock* . . . and *Das kommt davon* [*Sardakai*] . . . were lasting successes. Krenek passes less for a contemporary than for a relic of the twenties." Krenek's excellent essays, he noted, were further grounds to regret Krenek's having remained in the United States when he might have contributed to the cultural life of West Germany with his shrewd commentaries. Now at eighty, Krenek had placed himself at a remoteness that could scarcely be overcome.

One must concede that Dümmling had a point. Much of Krenek's music of the sixties did present formidable obstacles, though this was scarcely because he had emigrated, for he was using styles and strategies developed in West Germany. In view of all the honors and festivals granted him, it did seem that he complained a lot. Moreover, certain of his works were doing well: *Leben des Orest* at Portland, *Karl V* at Salzburg and Munich, *Orpheus und Eurydike* at Graz, and *Spätlese* wherever Fischer-Dieskau sang it—though except for *Spätlese*, it was earlier works that found favor. The income from his music was such that he enjoyed financial security and could indulge his taste for travel without having to wait for invitations that would cover his expenses. Many a person—many a *composer*—would envy him the life he now led.

Yet what he most desired continued to elude him. Officials, radio and television programmers, and young musicologists might pay him homage, but his stature was still not widely acknowledged among nonprofessionals, nor was his later music much performed except as a consequence of commissions, subsidies, birthdays, and other special factors. Compared with Milhaud, Weill, and Hindemith he was almost unknown in America, outside a few centers such as Minneapolis—St. Paul and San Diego where coteries of friends and admirers worked diligently on his behalf (and even they needed special occasions to account for performing any considerable amount of his music).

Things were far better in Europe, where most of his new works had their premieres; but since 1957 such works often ceased to be noticed after a few performances unless he was invited to conduct and put them on the program himself. Significantly, a festival in Basel styled as "Music 1945–1985" included music by Stravinsky, Fortner, Martin, Chavez, and the Darmstadt clique, but nothing by Krenek, even though Paul Sacher was a principal conductor.

Starting in 1975 the California record company of Orion issued such major works as *Gesänge des späten Jahres*, *Sestina*, and *Spätlese*, but Krenek was forced to underwrite them himself. Because Orion lacked an effective advertising department, the records were scarcely noticed, and sales were so meager that after five years and ten recordings Krenek gave up. Thus, despite the great changes that had taken place since the dark days of the early fifties, despite all the agreeable words and impressive awards, Willnauer's eulogy was fundamentally correct: eminent though he might be, Krenek was neglected.

Added to these disappointments was concern over his health, now a cause for anxiety for the first time since the false alarm over heart trouble at Vassar. In the fall of 1967 he was found to have a dangerous aneurysm that required chest surgery. He recovered quickly, but the ordeal made him conscious of his age—not by chance, he entitled a work of this period *Exercises of a Late Hour*. A few years later, following the premiere of *Spätlese*, he and Gladys went on a motor tour of southern France. As they crossed high mountain passes on their way to Luzern for a concert, Krenek experienced extreme difficulty breathing and they were forced to return to Grenoble. Again he recovered quickly, but he soon learned that he had gallstones. For the next decade this condition would frequently cause intense pain; it also forced him to go on a strict fat-free diet and greatly reduce his consumption of wine, one of the pleasures on which he had always counted, in good times and bad. In June 1976 he developed circulatory problems, and the carotid artery on the right side of his neck had to be removed in a small but potentially dangerous operation. The following November he underwent surgery for the removal of cataracts. Forced to read with a magnifying glass for two months while his eyes healed enough for him to wear contact lenses, he was depressed and, as he told Friedrich Sartor, "miserably reduced."⁵ His poor eyesight made walking difficult, even after he obtained the lenses. As a consequence he exercised less, which slowed his movements and made him suddenly seem much older.

All these troubles he and Gladys had to face almost alone. He had always tended to think of himself as "living on the move," as he put it, and after Hitler had taken over Austria he had wanted no ties. Shy and reserved, he spoke even to his closest friends mainly about music (though very little about work in progress) or about places he had visited on his travels, never about his innermost concerns. (Only when he was queried directly by someone writing about him was he candid, and then always so.) Much as California fascinated him, he had no roots there. As he told the audience at the Palm Springs Festival, "Searching for some common denominator for the various fractions adding up to my seventy-five years, I seem to discover as a more or less permanent trend a knack for time and again maneuvering myself out of contemporary developments." After giving examples of setting himself apart, he noted that he was not acknowledged as an American composer, but neither was he, despite all the honors, acknowledged as an Austrian one—acknowledged, he meant

but did not say, on *his* terms, which to him meant many more performances of his music. But, he concluded politely, "I like it here better than elsewhere, and I call myself fortunate for being able to do so." (He always charmed his listeners, for he spoke easily and gracefully from a stage or a speaker's dais, particularly if he stood at a lectern. Such circumstances provided a kind of psychological barricade behind which he felt secure and confident; even when ad libbing he would give play to the Jonny in him, displaying wit and irony—and often at his own expense.)

In these late years, however, he was increasingly troubled by misgivings about the value of music and the dignity of the composer's calling. He had moments when he wondered why he bothered with composing when so few seemed to notice or care. From time to time he thought of giving it up and devoting himself wholly to writing, and he might have were it not for commissions that still came to him unsolicited. (Some did notice, some did care.) But after *Sardakai* he slowed down. Occasional large works such as *Spätlese* and the mass *Gib uns den Frieden* (Give us peace), op. 208, commissioned by the North Elbe Union of Hamburg and completed in the fall of 1970, were spaced out with little pieces—some the merest trifles—for voice, accordion, flute and bass viol duo, and trombone and piano.

Yet regardless of his misgivings, regardless of the slower pace, a new force, to be seen in *Spätlese* and later in *The Dissembler*, was gathering in the larger works. Now, given his dissatisfaction with his position professionally and his sense that time was running out, he wanted, as he had in *Reisebuch*, *Gesänge des späten Jahres*, and *The Ballad of the Railroads*, to speak of himself directly to the listener. He wanted, above all, to *communicate*—and not just in works with texts, but, as the next years would show, in concerti, pieces for chamber and full orchestra, even a string quartet.

Moreover, he had, after all his exploration, become bored with serialism and its strictures. Almost without knowing it, he had reached another turning point. Out of his long experience with the twelve-tone technique and then serialism, but now wanting to be free to follow impulse and intuition, to invent as in his earliest atonal days, he was developing a new, deeply personal idiom that made his music once again easily accessible. In spite of uncertain health, self-doubts, and bouts of depression, Krenek was coming with this idiom to a magnificent "late harvest" of works, fewer in number but comparable in their expressiveness with the great works of the forties.

From his experience with electronic music and experimenting with fragments while rotating serial components he had found that he enjoyed shuffling small segments around and linking them in different ways. One did not work straight through a composition when using electronic equipment; instead one recorded various subsections and put them aside to be assembled later. As he listened to playbacks Krenek would be thinking, "Would this make a good beginning?"; "This I can certainly use somewhere"; "How do you get from here to there?" What is more, when immersed in serialism he had formed the habit of developing serially,

simply for the fun of it, little ideas that came to him at odd moments, which, like the electronic subsections, would be put aside for possible future use. He had acquired such facility with serial techniques that he could apply them to these fragments almost automatically; it was therefore easy for him to generate interesting musical cells, which he now felt free to move about playfully, even whimsically, until a certain order—not preordained—took his fancy.

Many years earlier Adorno had convinced Krenek that music might be moving toward the condition of extemporaneous speech, developing its subject matter on a line through time as a thought is developed in speech. Forward movement was achieved by exploration, confrontation, interlocution, contradiction—perfect processes for piecing together his interesting cells. Such an open form did not allow for patterns of theme and variation, and interest tended to be concentrated in discrete moments. But these moments could be woven into a loose network of contrast, similarity, and repetition of cellular bits—or, as Krenek liked to think of them, objects in space.⁶ What is significant here is that in relying on intuition rather than on arrays of numbers, Krenek was returning to the practice of his early days, and now, as then, his intuition was personal, sonorous, expressive, and emotional, even though he continued to use the stylistic features—wide intervals, abrupt dynamic shifts, percussive instrumentation—of his most mechanistic serial works.

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Such, then, were the forces that would significantly affect the character of Krenek's texts and music for a dozen years during which he created works surpassing anything since *Sestina*. The mass *Gib uns den Frieden* was an indication in its richness and expressiveness—and its direct appeal to the audience—of things to come. *Statisch und ekstatisch* (Static and ecstatic), op. 214, which Krenek rightly regarded as being, despite its brevity, one of his major orchestral works,⁷ was composed on a commission from Paul Sacher in Albuquerque and Palm Springs between October 29, 1971, and June 19, 1972; it was first performed in Zürich on March 13, 1973, with Krenek conducting Sacher's excellent chamber orchestra of the Collegium Musicum. Idiosyncrasies from the past remain, but the listener perceives immediately that a radical change has occurred. The orchestra *sounds* different, for while there are percussive and pointillist passages, there are also reverberant sonorities and solid vertical masses that hint at tonalities. There is also a constant and tantalizing suggestion of melody, the melodious, or "ecstatic," sections being however contrasted with "static" ones, which Krenek thought had enough density to suggest immovable objects. Although one of the new "collages," the work as a whole is based on a twelve-tone row, and in the static portions the quantities of the intervals in the row are applied to other elements as well—yet with variable strictness: the first and fourth sections are not rigid, but the fifth is, and the eighth, the most "immovable," seems made up of carefully assembled, sharp-edged crystals of sound.

The seventh, also static, differs greatly: its plangent chords offer hints of tonality resembling those that issue from the towering sound masses of *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae*. Curiously, it is the freely developed ecstatic sections, with their percussive and pointillist writing and their quick shifts among the instruments, that sound most like the earlier serial works. Still, within them are supernal string passages absolutely unlike anything in the serial works, and the piano is used not to etch in seemingly autonomous notes but rather to hang dark curtains of sound before which the lines traced by the other instruments stand forth. The work is so sensuous, so eloquent, and so immediately enticing that one is inclined to regret the years Krenek spent on the stark, obdurate serial works, which by comparison seem almost to be exercises in mortification—until one remembers that it was the mastery gained by composing them that made *Statisch und ekstatisch* possible.

It was followed shortly by *Flaschenpost vom Paradies* (Bottled Mail from Paradise), op. 217, a piece for Austrian television using mime, dance, and spoken commentary to project a fairy tale of Krenek's own devising about the madness of the modern world. Krenek had heard that studio technicians were now so skillful with special effects that they could make it appear that a person was emerging from an ordinary bottle; so he decided to begin with this and follow pure impulse in selecting subsequent events and improvised electronic sounds. He wanted a series of loosely related moments interspersed with comments to point up the satire on humankind's obsession with rockets and space probes. Interested since the days of *Jonny spielt auf* in visual simulations and film techniques, he now found great amusement in developing not simply an opera libretto and score, but an actual shooting script complete with camera and lighting directions. Taking time off from *Spätlese*, he worked with the producer, Hermann Lanske (who had also overseen *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*), at the Vienna studio, where videotaping was completed early in the summer of 1973. The first broadcast took place that October 29 and a second on March 7, 1974, whereupon the tape was placed in the station's vaults, where it still reposes. The technical effects *were* impressive and the dancing excellent, though poorly photographed (feet were sometimes cut off), but Krenek's scenario was naive and the satire rather out of date, for its targets had been worked over in a plethora of cartoons, comic sketches, pop art, and films. Krenek was out of touch with the kind of people and events he was seeking mildly, almost genially, to ridicule.

Once the taping was finished he went back to *Spätlese*, which he finished later that summer. Then, after some recreational travel and conducting appearances, he returned to Palm Springs, where, using his new method of composing, he pieced together *Von vorn herein* (From the outset), op. 219, a short work for chamber orchestra and two pianos. "To read any meaning into this title," he remarked in notes for a record jacket, "is anybody's pleasure. I made use of the privilege which according to my observations many painters enjoy when they adorn their paintings

with titles that bear no visible reference to them.” Despite this whimsical attitude (for the work was certainly not composed “from the outset” but, as Krenek explained in the same notes, “started at various points, and these isolated elements were later brought into the present context”), *Von vorn herein* is cumbersome and wearying.

The same cannot be said for its immediate successor, *Auf- und Ablehnung*, op. 220. Composed for full orchestra and completed during the autumn of 1974, it received its first performance in Nürnberg on June 13, 1975, as part of International Organ Week, for which it had been commissioned. Krenek said on several occasions that this title, too, meant nothing, but in his program notes for a performance at the Santa Barbara festival he explained: “‘Auf’ means ‘up’ and ‘Ab’ means ‘down.’ ‘Auf-lehnung’ means protest, rebellion (as against an obnoxious regime). ‘Ablehnung’ means rejection, and the pun rides on the vacillating connotation of ‘lehnung’ [meaning ‘leaning against’ or ‘resting upon’].” Whatever the intended joke, *Rebellion and Rejection* makes an apt title for an exciting, emotionally charged work in the grand manner of the early symphonies.

This was not another collage, for in it Krenek followed what he later termed an “instinctual flow” in treating rowlike motives. Long portions are through-composed, yet patterns are repeated and recognizably developed; the middle portion is canonical; those passages that have some of the properties of serialism add piquancy. But the work, though Krenek called its structure “fantasylike,” seems coherent to an ordinary listener, for whom it is readily accessible. Its appeal, however, comes more from its dense orchestral effects than its clarity. These are enriched by being prerecorded and played back at designated points during the performance so that the orchestra sounds both with and against itself, producing unexpected abundancies and startling concatenations. The effect is wholly different from that produced some years earlier by *Exercises of a Late Hour*, when Krenek taped *electronic* material to the sounds of the orchestra. This is an immense, surging, moody work filled with a grandeur long absent from Krenek’s music.

The paramount work of the first years after Krenek moved away from strict serialism is *Spätlese*. Neither its poetry nor its music is preminent. Its greatness comes from their interaction. Taken alone, the poetry is amateurish in places and obscured by private allusions. The music, though many times more accomplished technically, is entirely subordinate to the text, and thus of limited musical interest strictly speaking; like the music of the later operas, it elucidates nuances, redoubles feelings, and articulates the narrative and drama of the text. The first line of the first song, “So spät, so spät” (“So late, so late”), introduced by a great double glissando sweeping up the keyboard followed by tone clusters sounded with both forearms on the keys, establishes the mood of the cycle with its many anxieties and frustrations:

So late, so late
 the grapes are still out in the vineyard.
 Is it not too late when danger looms and threatens?
 Has the plant still enough vigor to lift the sap from the root,
 to fill the delicate berry tightly with pale-golden glimmer,
 to hold the weight of the precious grape?⁸

There follows a description of the mists and hazy sunshine hovering above grapes being saved for late harvest. Only a reference to the wine as “the spirit” hints that it is, in fact, symbolic of Krenek’s late thought and music, which are vulnerable to the “bitter frost” of rejection and neglect. With its romantic veils, wan shimmer, autumnal stillness, and lonely, faintly melancholy distances, this song is the most imagistic and manifestly “poetic” of the cycle.

The second song makes explicit the relation of the wine with Krenek’s music. It also recalls Adorno’s belief that the precious works of the Schönberg school should be carefully preserved for the delectation of future audiences, which, with the passage of time, should be able to appreciate them:

Harvested late, it will survive the harvesters,
 put away in the cellar to wait the evening of the fest.

Krenek’s neologism *Spätschreiben* (late writing) emphasizes the point:

Late writing, ridiculed as poor imitation of swift present . . .
 hieroglyph buried in a royal tomb,
 awaiting the light that is due it.
 He will not live to see his readers.
 Was it worth it to have lived?

Plainly, for those acquainted with his personal history, this is an allusion to Krenek’s rejection by the Young Turks of the Kranichsteiner Musikinstitut and Eimert’s Cologne studio and to their scornful charge that he was an outmoded composer trying to keep up by imitating them. But the ordinary listener would not recognize the allusion and might be further confounded by the clumsy metaphor that refers to Krenek’s music as a “late unveiled model of future vintage” (“spät enthülltes Vorbild künftiger Fechsung”). The poem seems intended to evoke a measure of feeling not justified without recourse to information (about the rejection) that does not exist in the text but must be imported, by those who have it, from the outside.

The third poem is more conventionally versified than the first two. All but three of the lines rhyme, though in some instances the rhyme occurs not between two end-words but between the end-word and an internal one in the same line. Most lines are in tetrameter, and where they are not the variation is appropriate to the

sense. The cryptic account of Krenek's treatment by the younger composers continues:

A late guest is coming in.
The boys are squatting fiercely around the new wine. . . .
He is esteemed but uninvited.
The boys stare into their glasses.
He is honored, but not in demand.
He sits alone by the old wine.

The uproar of the boys drives him away, and they ask:

What happened to the old guy?
Has he run after the new?

They end by quarreling among themselves:

The youngsters make a daring din.
The cats wail through the whole long night on the cold roof.

The fourth song seems to be a little homily. It begins:

In the descent of time, the elapsing obliterates
what sinks into the continuity.
Prehistoric artifact reaches posterity.
Form, momentarily raised from the mud,
Becomes model for long pent-up creative power.*

"Prehistoric artifact" signifies the music of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which so influenced Krenek, while the new that becomes obsolete "in the swift sequence of vintages" includes the novelties, presumably of serialism, that the younger composers abandoned. As a further dig at them Krenek wrote that we "go astray"

caught in the meaning-maze of language,
infatuated with the craziness of wordplay,

by which he meant not such punning as he himself employed to crowd more meanings into his text, but rather the borrowings by Stockhausen and his associates of

*The German text of the first stanza of the fourth song was inadvertently omitted from the transcription supplied with the Orion recording, the only one presently available. It reads:

Im Gefälle der Zeit verwischt die fließende,
was absinkt ins Bleibende.
Vorweltlich Artefakt kommt auf die Nachwelt.
Gestalt, vorläufig aus dem Schlamm geholt,
wird Modell für lang aufgestaute Geist gewalt.

scientific terms for discourse about music when ordinary terms sufficed. (Boulez, it should be noted, did not do this; in fact, he scolded the others for such pretensions.)

The fifth song is a dialogue with oneself such as Krenek was fond of conducting in essays. Here the self,

Weighed to the ground by insidious depression,
startled by harrowing anxiety, threatened by doom . . . ,
superseded in the Pantheon,
degraded to a nonperson,
a laughingstock in heaven,
a thing of scorn in the hellhole,

wavers between a longing to participate in life and the desire to be spared its risks and humiliations.

But: are you not cunningly denying yourself the joy of the sour grapes
because you do not want to pay for the wine of life
with the blood money of the fear of death?

Yet life has become so dire that,

tormented by knowledge of horror and violence,
bitten by the serpents of guilty conscience,
tortured by the tongs of sudden danger,

the self is driven to recall grim lines by the eighteenth-century poet Christian Günther:

Oh that your father had spent himself in a whorehouse
and a greedy cancer had eaten the fruit of your mother's womb,
for you would have been better off, never to have been born.

It is the cry of a soul in hell, made especially so by the acrid music. Yet Krenek meant this to be taken as an outburst of his own anguish, even if the listener knew nothing of his personal history, which leads one to ask, "Why such a commotion?" If this were meant to be the plaint of a displaced Palestinian or a victim of apartheid, there would be reason enough to feel "threatened by doom" and "degraded to a nonperson." But can one who had recently received Vienna's Ring of Honor speak of himself in such terms?

In the sixth and final song Krenek addresses the listener directly. Aware of how transitory life is, he has "uncautiously" relied on the "southern sand" (the Southwestern desert) to provide what the "northern fog" (of Central Europe) denied. (Vital energy? Longevity? Recognition? Perhaps all of these?) In this he has emu-

lated Max by moving to America, or Orestes and Thoas when they left the latter's frozen kingdom for sunny Greece. It may have been folly to count on the sun, the wind, the sand; nevertheless, he now writes late "what should be permanent, / . . . wisdom read out of the wine. / Such a bottled message [his music] has gone out ["Solche Flaschenpost ist ausgegangen." Is there here some obscure connection with the television work he was preparing for Lanske?]. Where are the shores that will receive it? / The response [the acknowledgment of his wisdom, his music] will not reach the sender." Now that he has acknowledged his isolation, a calmness comes to him:

O consolation of the world that trickles from the grape,
 ripen quietly, you light wine.
 Darkness gathers over the vineyards,
 the lights in the valley vanish.
 The faraway windwheel only whirs melodiously.
 The night will be long.
 I am reading late,
 and I am waiting,
 waiting....

These elegiac last lines bring together idea, imagery, symbolism, rhythm, and verbal melody. In their quiet way they are more affecting than many of the fervid lines preceding them. Krenek never wrote better verse.

The most conspicuous aspects of the text as a whole are consonance and the frequent punning and other forms of wordplay. Consonance includes rhyme, but outside the third song there is little end-rhyming, though much internal rhyming occurs both within and across lines, as in "Die Knaben *machen kühnen Krach*." This comes in large measure from Krenek's pattering with key words such as *Lese, lesen, Leser, Reife, Reif, and Gefülle, Wechselfälle*. How far afield his puns reached can be seen in two lines from the sixth poem:

Unbedacht gab ich der Sonne,
 unbehütet dem Winde mich hin.

Thoughtlessly I gave myself to the sun,
 unguarded to the wind.

Unbedacht means "thoughtlessly," but it also means "unguarded" from its link with *Dach*, "roof" or "shelter," and *dachen*, "to roof" or "to shelter." Thus Krenek telescopes thoughtlessness and unprotectedness. This leads to *unbehütet*, also meaning "unguarded," and linked to *Hüte*, "hats," "covers," even "tops of mushrooms," and thus by association "heads"; *unbehütet* thus suggests "without a head," thereby adding emphasis to the thoughtlessness. Such is the density of Krenek's language

and the plenitude of his nuances. Yet there is a certain scattering rather than accumulation of power. When W. H. Auden wrote,

Deftly, admiral, cast your fly
Into the slow deep hover,
Till the wise old trout mistake and die;
Salt are the deeps that cover
The glittering fleets you led,
White is your head,

he accumulated power—and great irony—from the consistency of the death-by-water images. In the whiteness of his old age the admiral is reduced from killing men to killing trout, but he is still deft. Volumes of social satire and curiously mixed anger and amusement are suggested here. Krenek, who easily invented vivid images, moved too quickly from one field of reference to another, sometimes producing mixtures such as “late unveiled model of future vintage.” And because his meters, apart from those in the third song, are ragged, being crowded with extra, unaccented syllables, the overall effect of the text of *Spätlese* is less that of verse than of exhortative prose.

The verse forms recall the loosely metered hymns of Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843), whom Fischer-Dieskau had suggested as a text source, and of Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772–1801). Krenek knew their works well, especially the poems of Hölderlin, from whom he had taken texts for two choral works in 1924, *Vier kleine Männerchöre* (Four little men’s choruses), op. 32, and *Die Jahreszeiten* (The seasons), op. 35. While he did not turn to these poets for models when creating *Spätlese*, he was well aware that he was drawing on conventions of German Romanticism that they had done much to establish. He found Hölderlin very sympathetic, by reason of his humanitarianism, his interest in ancient Greece, and his detestation of war, authoritarianism, and bourgeois culture. They shared an intense feeling for the open sky and warmth of Hellas, for sunlight as a manifestation of divine creative power. They admired what they supposed had been the joyous and harmonious civilization of Athens. In addition, during his lifetime Hölderlin, too, had been alienated and had lacked recognition from his countrymen. Thus Fischer-Dieskau’s suggestion was doubly apt.

The spirit and characteristic imagery to which Krenek would have responded may be seen in “Hälfte des Lebens” (The middle of life), one of Hölderlin’s best known poems:

Mit gelben Birnen hänget
Und voll mit wilden Rosen
Das Land in den See,
Ihr holden Schwäne,
Und trunken von Küssen

Tunkt ihr das Haupt
In heilignüchterne Wasser.
Weh, mir, wo nehm' ich, wenn
Es Winter ist, die Blumen, und wo
Den Sonnenschein
Und Schatten der Erde?
Die Mauern stehn
Sprachlos und kalt, im Winde
Klirren die Fahnen.

With yellow pears the land
And full of wild roses,
Hangs down into the lake,
You lovely swans,
And drunk with kisses
You dip your heads
Into the hallowed, sober water.
But oh, where shall I find
When winter comes, the flowers, and where
The sunshine
And shade of the earth?
The walls loom
Speechless and cold, in the wind
Weathercocks clatter.⁹

As his travel essays, his boyhood sketches to illustrate his history of Athburg, and his watercolors depicting California mountains and deserts make clear, Krenek's imagination had a markedly visual orientation. This helps to explain his lifelong fascination with films and the fact that his poetry from all periods is characteristically visual and filled with images such as figure in Hölderlin's works. Krenek's word-paintings tend to be associated with day and night. The first are suffused with sunlight, often filtered through mists, and with the play of golden shadows among convoluted hills and deep valleys. Their apotheosis is the Austrian vineyard, of which Krenek wrote in the prose-poetry of "Unser Wein," the eighth song of *Reisebuch*: "Nothing is so beautiful as strolling through the vineyards on a summer day. There, as far as the eye can reach, the gentle slopes are covered with vines. . . . And near the skyline where dark and bushy vines begin their rule, a tiny vineyard seeks its place in the forest, opens wide its heart to the sun." In the final chorus of *Leben des Orst*, Greece is extolled for its vineyards and sunny mountains, emblems of happiness and life enhancement. But the night images, exemplified in *Gesänge des späten Jahres* by falling leaves, a faraway train whistle, a guttering candle, a dark corridor with blank locked doors, suggest waning vitality and invoke loneliness and despair, even a sense of impending death. An Ur-poem of sorts lurks behind Krenek's interweaving of light and darkness. In it an anxiety-ridden, melancholy,

vaguely guilty (of what?) wanderer yearns for an idealized homeland compounded of Styria, Greece, and California, but gropes, tormented by remote sounds and songs, through a cold and stormy night toward immolation in some dim infinitude. He is Werther, Max on the glacier—and the protagonist of *Spätlese*.

Apart from “Lebenslied” and other fragments from the summer of 1917, Krenek never wrote any verse unrelated to his music. Although he admired Hölderlin, Kraus, Donne, Hopkins, the poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from whom he took the texts for his 1932 *Cantata on the Transitoriness of Earthly Things*, and above all, Goethe, he never consciously modeled his lines on another’s or made a close study of poetic technique.¹⁰ His experience with the medium was limited compared with his experience as an essayist: in addition to *Spätlese*, *Gesänge des späten Jahres*, and the juvenilia, his poetry comprises only the doggerel songs of *Sprung über den Schatten* (though much of the rest of the libretto suggests the proximity of some form of irregular meter); Anita’s song in *Jonny*; the shepherd’s song in *Leben des Orest*; certain pulsing free-verse passages imbedded in *Reisebuch*;* King Francis’s song in *Karl V*; *The Ballad of the Railroads*, *Sestina*, and *Quintina* (the only verses that adhere to a stanzaic pattern); *Glauben und Wissen*; twenty or so irregularly rhymed and metered lines in *Feiertags-Kantate*; and the first and third parts of *They Knew What They Wanted*, op. 227, a recitation with instruments created in 1977. All told these amount to only a few hundred lines. The verses of the operas, whether the rollicking burlesque of *Sprung* or the plaintive nostalgia of Anita or King Francis, fulfill their dramatic functions well, as does the narrative verse of *They Knew What They Wanted*. The best poetry is found in *Gesänge* and the first and last songs of *Spätlese*. The rest is middling and lacks figurative and metrical vigor.

Spätlese—except for the fourth song, which deals with time and is organized by serialism—is made up of collages of row-generated materials developed loosely in a variety of ways that include spectral chords, tone clusters placed at the ends of the keyboard, rappings on the piano frame (following mention of the clattering wind machines that frighten birds away from the ripening grapes), and glissandos stroked directly on the strings (setting off the lines “Great stillness arches over the wide land / And resounds from the firmament” and the phrase “softly and melodiously in the hazy distance,” thus multiplying the expressiveness of the words many times). The open form allows for an easy accommodation of the voice line to the irregular meters as well as the manipulation of tonal intervals and musical accents to emphasize key words, while the piano provides punctuation and commentary between the verbal units. The flow of the work is controlled to an unusual degree by the *sense* of the words; a dynamic integration of all the elements is thereby achieved, one that is

*The opening is in pentameter: “Ich reise aus, meine Heimat zu entdecken.” But most of the cycle is in plain prose, as is “dass es durch Talent den Mangel und die eigene Indolenz besiegt.”

sometimes missing when one has to settle on an uneasy compromise (or no compromise at all) between the requirements of verse and music.

Paradoxically, it is the serial fourth song that seems most conventionally “musical” because the vocal part is more like ordinary singing than like a dramatic recitation, and the accompaniment sounds more pianistic in the ordinary sense. Occasionally disparities between the text and the music crop up, as in the second song, where some kind of row seems to have been applied to the dynamics, resulting in peculiar drops and outbursts that are much at odds with the words. A similar incongruence occurs in the final line of the third song—“Die Katzen jammern die ganz lange Nacht auf dem kalten Dach” (“The cats wail through the whole long night on the cold roof”)—when the dynamics are abruptly reduced from fortissimo to piano without regard to the visual image created by the words. But on the whole, the effect of the synergy of words and music is one of unusual subtlety, intensity, and expressiveness.

Spätlese, in short, is uneven but magnificent. The autobiographical allusions obscure some passages, and discomfit those who consider them too repining. Even so, the work surmounts its private occasions and rises to the level of the universal. It moves from the fear of one man that his life and work will fall short of their true measure to a vision of the isolation and jeopardy in which modern artists and thinkers can end their days. Its fervor brings to mind, not improperly, the vehemence of Job.

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Of the performances with Fischer-Dieskau, the last, at the Berlin Festival on September 23, 1974, was the most polished, and the knowing and appreciative audience was warmly receptive. The work’s success helped bring about an invitation for Krenek to compose what became *Feiertags-Kantate*, celebrating his seventy-fifth and the Berlin Festival’s twenty-fifth years. When he began it he was in a mischievous, even rebellious, mood. He would not give the Berliners a mellow rumination on age and fate: he had had his say in *Spätlese* and now felt more like mocking anniversaries and their attendant solemnities.

Beginning with no more than the notion of the contrast between twenty-five and seventy-five years, he gradually assembled fragments from *Parsifal*; from a Dadaist poem by Hans Arp; from “Arche Noah SOS” by Walter Mehring, a Berlin poet of his own generation; from poems by Kraus, Rilke, and Hopkins; from a parody he made on Schiller’s “Ode to Joy”; and from Ecclesiastes and Isaiah, mixing the Lutheran and Catholic versions. All these he pieced together with words of his own. Meanwhile he had been hoarding bits of music, which he now fitted to the words, starting with the accompaniment to the quotation from Kraus, which came near the end and formed the climax of the work, and working backward and forward by

instinct. The words were distributed among a speaker, a mezzo-soprano, a baritone, and a chorus, and the instrumentation, drawn from a symphony orchestra treated not as a large unit but rather as a storehouse of timbres, was arranged according to the characteristics of the voices. To emphasize the mockery, he had the speaker start things off while the instrumentalists were still tuning up.

In the end, though, it turned out he had not yet said all he had in mind about age and fate, and the mood of the work moved quickly from its opening flippancy to grimness and even contempt. "In some of Kokoschka's last paintings," Robert Hughes has remarked, "there is a real sense of an old man's rage and an old man's freedom—the sort of deliberate clumsiness by a highly gifted draftsman, the sense of the ludicrous posture, the gross energy of the old satyr, that fires up our responses when we look at a good late Picasso."¹¹ A similar effect is produced by the rough texture of Krenek's music and his lashing out against a century of hatred, hunger, war, terror, and death. Suddenly, in the midst of the catalogue of horrors, Krenek cried out in his own words that we must have faith to sustain us. Then the mezzo pleads:

Grosser Gott, gib dass es Dich gibt.
Gib dass wir an Dich glauben.

Almighty God, show that you exist.
Show that we can believe in you.

Yet it seemed absurd to pray to a God who does not exist, asking him please to be. For emphasis, Krenek placed the Dadaist fragment immediately after this plea.¹²

The climactic quotation from Kraus describes an eternal holiday when humankind has disappeared, time has ceased, and the blessed spirits admire the sun, which now, as once at the behest of Joshua, stands still. "Big words," the speaker remarks sarcastically, to which the soloists react by quoting Rilke: big words are not for us; to survive is all ("Überstehn ist alles"). Whereupon the chorus, accompanied by a simulation of jazz-rock, quotes Ecclesiastes 9:7–10: enjoy what you can, for in hell there is no work, no art, no understanding, no wisdom. The persistent mezzo asks God to furnish a good antidote, but the speaker cuts things short by calling out "Feier-Abend," a traditional phrase marking the end of a working day and meaning in effect, "Go home." The audience did, but not before making plain its outrage. Critics confined themselves to brief descriptions of the work, but the ordinary concertgoers left no doubt that they regarded the work as a scandal: Krenek had insulted their literature, their religion, their festival, their musical propriety, and above all, themselves. The work has never been repeated.

Irreverence did reappear, though, this time as impudent gaiety, in the indelicate *They Knew What They Wanted*, op. 227—"they" being Ginreva, heroine of Boccaccio's *Decameron* 3.3; Tamar, from Genesis 38:1–26; and Pasiphaë; and "what they

wanted" being sexual satisfaction. An engaging bit of fluff composed for narrator, oboe, piano, percussion, and tape playback and completed in the fall of 1977, this work brings to mind *Schwergewicht*, *What Price Confidence?* and *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*. It is notable mainly for Krenek's having put aside the dejection of *Spätlese* and the black derisiveness of *Feiertags-Kantate* and his having for the first and only time used a computer to create some of the musical material. Pauline Oliveros, then director of the Center for Music Experiment at the University of California, San Diego, granted him time on the center's computer, and Krenek, having mastered the necessary steps in programming, obtained some taped matter, which he incorporated into the Tamar section. (This was, of course, some years before the appearance of "user friendly" personal computers and programs oriented especially to composing.) His curiosity satisfied, he concluded that the procedures were too laborious and time-consuming for the amount of music obtained and that although he had acquired some formidable theoretical and operational knowledge, he would not again use a computer.

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After *They Knew What They Wanted* Krenek entered a remarkable five-year period during which he composed eight major works—and nothing else except a miniature for voice and piano, privately created for the sixtieth birthday of his friend Annegret Batschelet-Massini, the wife of the classics professor for whom he had composed *Basler Massarbeit* in 1960. Not even a series of small strokes that he suffered in the fall of 1981 deterred him. The first significant health problem in five years apart from the gallbladder trouble (which was being controlled by careful dieting), the strokes partly paralyzed his right arm, putting an end to his piano playing and altering his handwriting, but in no way did they affect his creative powers or the scale of the works he was undertaking.

Among the works composed during this period were three concerti and a string quartet, traditional genres that he had not worked in for more than two decades—further indications of how much he was, if not always consciously, reaching out to the audience rather than simply pleasing himself. With *Arc of Life*, op. 234, Krenek created another of his finest orchestral works, one to stand beside *Horizon Circled* and *Statisch und ekstatisch*. Commissioned through the efforts of Krenek's friend John Norman by the College of the Desert, it was composed during the summer of 1981 in Vienna (where Krenek was made an honorary citizen in June), Seefeld, and Palm Springs. Its premiere took place in Palm Springs on February 24, 1982, with Gerard Schwarz conducting the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. Norman had worked hard to make this a grand occasion. Peter Moser, the Austrian consul general for Los Angeles, was present and read a letter from the president of Austria expressing pride in Krenek's work. A local judge read a gracious letter from Edmund G. Brown, Jr., the governor of California, and announced that a resolution by the

California legislature honoring Krenek was on its way. The orchestra of young players, who obviously understood and liked the music, gave it a sensitive and spirited performance, which was politely received by the subscription audience.

Like *Statisch und ekstatisch* of ten years before, *Arc of Life* is subdivided into short movements—in this case twelve—some of which are free fantasies and some “static,” that is, composed according to astringent serial techniques. The use of serialism influenced the choice of percussion instruments (tom-toms, blocks, a marimba, a xylophone), the pointillist passages, the wide intervals, and the extreme and abrupt dynamic shifts. Nevertheless, the long strands of supple melody and the upward-veering chords that sway and shimmer like reeds in twilight evoke a yet wider and subtler range of feelings than those of the earlier work, feelings that arise, as the title and the names of the sections suggest, from an autobiographical impulse. But how different from the feelings of *Spätlese*! For despite sections called “Conflict” and “Shock and Solace,” there are also sections called “Somewhat Whimsical” and “Lighthearted” and, the last one, “Exit Gracefully.” The variety of moods is remarkable: from wistful, wry, and pensive to irritated and on to carefree and jesting. Never sentimental, never immoderate, never stereotyped, the movements suggest that as he composed Krenek was enjoying, at least for the moment, a satisfactory accommodation to the arc of life.

Next came the Second Organ Concerto, op. 235, dedicated to the brilliant young Viennese organist Martin Haselböck and premiered with Haselböck as soloist in Melbourne on May 17, 1983. In it the brute power of the organ, to which Krenek gave some stupendous tone clusters, overwhelms the listener and arouses awe and downright physical excitement; enthusiastic approval follows as Krenek exploits the immense dynamic range of the instrument, moving from thunderous detonations to gauzy whispers. But although the third of its four movements has filaments of delicate lyricism, the work seems at points to blunder about, giving an impression of bombast and melodrama in spite of its felicities.

Far superior is the Second Concerto for Cello, op. 236. A titanic, even reckless work, it nevertheless avoids seeming labored or orotund. Begun in Switzerland and completed in Palm Springs on October 3, 1982, it had its premiere with David Geringas as soloist at the Salzburg Festival on August 9, 1983. Once again the range of feeling is wide, for this concerto, especially in the solo passages, is by turns brooding, tender, pensive, raging, desperate, and scornful; it, too, suggests an autobiographical impulse, though the expression is tempestuous rather than subtle, reminding one of the symphonies of the twenties.

The writing for cello is magnificent, the instrument calling forth those aspects of Krenek's imagination that made him such a splendid composer of vocal music. There are melodic lines by turns limpid and sinewy, points of strenuous contention between the soloist and the orchestra, and a final cadenzalike solo passage that returns the work to the beginning before a last, mysterious, all-encompassing chord.

Motivic cells are moved about in ways that are easy to perceive and give the work resilience and continuity. There are no reminders of serial idiosyncrasies—no marimbas, no rattling wood blocks or tambourines: it is as if the interval of 1957–1970 had never occurred. Again Hughes's remark about Kokoschka's late work is suggestive, but a nearer parallel can be found not in painting but in drama—Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Like that play, the concerto ends with peace, dignity, and beauty after a great storm. So excellent is the music that the comparison is not inapt.

Shortly before he began composing *Art of Life* Krenek had completed a work more overtly autobiographical and valedictory, his Eighth String Quartet, op. 233, begun in Seefeld a few weeks before he turned eighty and finished in Palm Springs on the following New Year's Day. Quite naturally the events of 1980 had caused Krenek to look back across his life and music, and he expressed his thoughts upon returning to this genre after thirty-seven years in two ways: first, by quoting bits from all of his earlier quartets except the seventh, and second, by showing how much he would have liked at this time to believe in the existence of God, placing "I.N.D." (*in nomine Dei*, in the name of God) at the beginning and "D.G." (both *Dei gratia*, by the grace of God, and *Deo gratias*, thanks be to God) at the end of the work—explicit indications of his awareness of his mortality. Of the self-quotations he wrote on February 27, 1984, to Martin Zenck:

I believe that one can regard the origin of this later quartet as motivated by the need for codification of what had earlier been achieved. . . . The quotations in Number 8 are deliberately treated unobtrusively. To a degree they represent private footnotes, which to the reader (but not to the listener) should indicate that toward the end of my career I am conscious of having done something earlier in this sphere.¹³

The coy understatement does not disguise Krenek's concern about his standing. Certainly that standing was well known to the members of the Thouvenel Quartet, who had so favorably impressed Krenek with their handling of the earlier quartets in Santa Barbara in 1979 and for whom the work was composed on a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. They repaid the honor with a splendid first performance in Carnegie Hall on June 7, 1981.

Martin Zenck believes that each of the earlier quartets signifies a turning point in Krenek's musical progress. Yet each evolved from the preceding one and from changes taking place in other music of the day. Thus there was a continuity among them that he does not find between the Eighth and the Seventh Quartets; these, he thinks, were too far separated by the passage of the years and the distractions, particularly Krenek's long adherence to strict serialism, which cut him off from contemporary musical history. Even the Seventh and First bear greater similarities to each other, Zenck maintains, than the Eighth does to any of the preceding quartets, despite the self-quotations it contains.

His points are valid. For, as in his other works of the early 1980s, Krenek worked

with an open form that enabled him to treat the quotations as collage material. To bring the work to a conclusion he used a retrograde version of the opening, but there is no formal reason for the retrogression (as there would be in one of Webern's "mirror" compositions); the close therefore seems not so much terminative, according to Zenck, as simply "discontinued." Yet Krenek does achieve a synthesis of disparities, and the work gives an effect of wholeness: the atonality creates an ambience in which the quotations are *perceived* as cohering, and the contrasting elements follow each other so quickly that they seem not autonomous and freestanding but deliberately opposed. What is more, Krenek did not hesitate subtly to modify the quotations so that they could become fully participating "new" elements of the work.

Quite apart from its musical merits, the Eighth String Quartet impresses one as a display of remarkable fertility and energy in an eighty-year-old man of uncertain health who had recently undergone all the rigors of this anniversary year. Having no predetermined form or formula, the work had to be created afresh at every point along the way. Yet it never hesitates or sags and is everywhere vivid, taut, and beautiful, and it earned the warmest approval at its premiere. One cannot but wish that Krenek had not stayed away so long from a genre that, like vocal music, was particularly suited to his genius.

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Of all the late works having an autobiographical cast, *The Dissembler*, when properly understood, is the most comprehensive and revealing, surpassing *Gesänge des späten Jahres*, *Ballad of the Railroads*, and *Spätlese* and, in many respects, even such explicitly autobiographical writings as *Selbstdarstellung* and *Horizons Circled*. This is perhaps paradoxical, given the title and the fact that the work closes with the words, "All this was just pretense." Yet Krenek admitted its autobiographical character during an interview with Claudia Maurer Zenck on June 4, 1980. When she asked why he had hidden his true self behind so many layers, he confirmed that it was owing to fears of misinterpretation and injury. He thought that calling the work a dissimulation would disarm the listener.¹⁴ Feeling safe behind this mask, he told more about his innermost self than ever before.

The story of *The Dissembler* began late in the autumn of 1977 when he was approached by the American Camerata for New Music of Baltimore with a request that he write a work for chamber orchestra. The Kreneks had recently become acquainted with Michael Ingham, the baritone who two years later would organize the Santa Barbara Festival, and they admired his musicianship and dramatic flair; Gladys Krenek had been urging her husband to compose something for Ingham when the request from Baltimore arrived. At the time, too, Krenek was reading an account by Italo Calvino of the Visconti-Sforza pack, the earliest surviving version of Tarot cards. In this fifteenth-century collection the first major figure, later to be

called the Magician and interpreted as a rather benign source of wisdom, is a juggler, mountebank, and master of illusion. The association of illusion with wisdom led interpreters such as Calvino to conclude that according to the Tarot cards the universe itself is an illusion. Krenek decided to incorporate this idea into a dramatic monologue that Ingham could perform with the Camerata ensemble. A patron who was underwriting the commission was reluctant to provide funding because he wanted a purely instrumental work, but Krenek prevailed and began assembling the text on January 1, 1978.*

About half of the text, including a quotation from *Sestina*, consists of Krenek's own words. The rest is made up of fragments from Goethe's *Faust: Part 2*, Euripides' *Hécuba*, Psalms 68, 69, 101, and 102, the Catholic missal, and that portion of Ecclesiastes he had used for the *Feiertags-Kantate*. Whereas in the cantata Krenek's words had served mainly to bind the quotations together, here they are paramount, and the quotations simply furnish illustrations and commentary. Moreover, the sources are now fewer and more familiar, thus carrying more associations for the audience. He finished the text in little more than a week, but because he was busy with a Webern festival in New Orleans and overseeing recordings by Ingham of *Gesänge des späten Jahres* and *Spätlese*, he did not complete the music until early June.

The premiere took place in Baltimore on March 11, 1979, and Ingham sang it again a few weeks later at the Santa Barbara Festival. Then on September 28, 1980, Fischer-Dieskau sang it in German at the Berlin Festival, accompanied by first-chair players from the Berlin Philharmonic led by Lothar Zagrosek, who had a deep affinity for Krenek's music.† Krenek, who was present, was greatly pleased, and the work was received with enthusiasm, even though it was actually far more nihilistic than the cantata, which had given such offense five years earlier. No doubt the participation of Fischer-Dieskau made the work more popularly acceptable. But also because this was a dramatic monologue, it was possible to take the nihilism as "in character."

The music is, even more than in *Spätlese*, subordinate to the words, and the vocal part, which includes some outright speaking, is everywhere nearer to speech than to singing, the treatment of the intervals, phrasing, tempi, meters, and dynamics being based on the aural singularities of spoken, not sung, drama. The instruments underscore and punctuate the text and provide a kind of sardonic commentary that creates an ambience of persiflage. This, it turns out, is part of the dissimulation, and it enables Krenek to take up without risk of embarrassment some serious personal matters. Occasional passages have momentary musical appeal that provokes one to

*New Year's Day seems to have a special importance for Krenek. An unusual number of his works have been started or completed on a January 1.

†It was he who conducted the splendid performance of *Symeon der Stylit* at Salzburg in the summer of 1988.

try to establish a musical continuity parallel and complementary to the text, as, for example, in traditional opera. But the only true continuity is verbal, and overall *The Dissembler* has little musical interest per se.

In *Feiertags-Kantate* a singer pleads with God to exist so that we can believe in him. This Krenek thought self-contradictory. Since the mid-sixties he had been increasingly unsure about whether the universe had any direction or purpose, and now more than ever before he was conscious of the apparent lack of any validating authority.¹⁵ He gives his dissembler the task of finding the truth “through deceit, verity through dissembling.” Pretending to be a scientist, the dissembler presents himself as a confident positivist, delighting, like Faust, in a vision of an intelligible universe. This brings to mind *Sestina* and the anomaly of seeming chance in the midst of order. “Oh fullness without bounds,” the dissembler exclaims, “O equipoise, oh circle, game, shape.” But his assurance is undercut by Heisenberg’s principle of indeterminacy: “I measure how fast it moves, but I can’t tell where it is. Is there no truth any longer? Only probability? No cause to verify? No effect to measure? [Is] chance supreme?” Playing a judge he looks for truth in the courts of law, but must concede that witnesses can be suborned. Perhaps, then, the truth can be found in the absurd, in the Tarot pack, but he finds there only omens of a meaningless death. Krenek now quotes (in Latin) from Psalms 101 and 102: “I am like an owl in the desert. My days are like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass.” This is followed by an even harsher passage (again in Latin) from Ecclesiastes: “No one lives forever. A living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.” Finally, the dissembler pretends to be himself and gives a brief history of his progress from belief through doubt to the time when, “As I now approach the dire vortex where we shall all be sucked out of this chaos to hide in the folds of nothingness, I wonder . . . and I believe as the spirit moves me, the Spirit of Intelligence, the Holy—and what I believe I call truth.” He seems to be echoing Kierkegaard, but no—“All this is just pretense. This is my exit cue. The dissembler goes. . . . Good night.”

The final flippancy seems to take back all the grimness, as if the whole work had been just an exercise in black humor. Yet in fact it cannot gainsay the fear of death and the unknown, the fear of being forgotten, which Krenek felt. Not since the anguished days of 1941–1942, from which came *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae*, not even in *Spätlese*, had his text been so dire. Beneath the jesting and the apparent casualness was a great yearning to know and to believe, constrained by harrowing doubt. “We can go so far with reasoning,” he had said a few years earlier. “It seems to fit. But *who* made it happen? Is there something else? Who put matter and energy in? It is our reasoning powers that lead us there—and make us doubt, too. We all get to wondering.” What the dissembler came out with just before his final, impudent denial was Krenek’s own position as he looked toward the end of his life: since

nobody knows anything with certainty, he could believe, if he wished, in some Holy Spirit.¹⁶

Yet that, too, would be dissembling.

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Krenek chose the title of this work with care, for he wished, as he explained in a note to a recording made by Ingham and the Camerata, “to capture the connotations of the Yiddish term for actor: the *Versteller*. This—originally German—word means that someone is not so much acting a part, but rather hiding his identity and pretending to be someone else.” That the dissembler is a bit of a rogue and not some benign wise man is suggested by other terms in the text—“juggler,” “joker,” *bagatto* [“juggler” in Italian], and *bagatto ultimo*—as well as by the common English synonyms for “dissembler,” such as “deceiver,” “deluder,” “double dealer,” “beguiler,” “trickster,” “impostor,” “humbler,” and “subverter.” Krenek had long been fascinated by dissemblers and put many into his operas: Dr. Berg in *Sprung*, Daniello (to a degree) in *Jonny*, the clandestine lovers in *What Price Confidence?*, Jason and Medea in *Der goldene Bock*, all of the characters in *Sardakai* except the melancholy poetaster, as well as others in *Schwergewicht*, *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*, and *Der Zauberspiegel*.

For one thing, a dissembler is an outsider, a rebel against convention and authority, a type toward which, rogue or not, Krenek had always been attracted. For another, a dissembler provides a means for introducing puzzles, puns, and other wordplays, a many-layered style, and with them ambiguity, ironic juxtapositions, and images of the pluralism, mutability, and ultimate enigma of life. Thus a dissembler might serve as a flexible and potentially powerful epistemological instrument with which to examine modes of knowing, even knowledge itself. It cannot be said, though, that in *The Dissembler* Krenek is able to get very far with epistemology. The dimensions won’t allow it. Thus the treatment of scientific, metaphysical, and theological issues verges on the platitudinous, to be saved by the salt of irony. What makes it interesting is not so much any philosophical merit as what it reveals of the man behind the mask.

Here one must proceed with caution. Every work of art evokes a persona, a presence felt with varying degrees of immediacy, created by recurring features of style and technique, by the cumulative effect of the details chosen for inclusion, and by the choice of themes and subjects in which to clothe those details. This is true of a musical composition whether it be by Okeghem, Haydn, Wagner, or Gershwin; of a poem, whether by Karl Kraus or Tennyson; of a painting, whether by Watteau, Kokoschka, or de Kooning. When the same persona is evoked by work after work from the same hand, we tend to identify it with the artist himself. Such identification may have been deliberately sought, as it was by Liszt and Brecht; more usually, though, it is something about which the artist is unaware or indifferent. The identification may be close to the truth—that is, the persona and its creator may have the

same distinctive qualities. Or it may be far from valid, as in the case of Hemingway, who had difficulty as he grew older in keeping up with the persona he had so carefully nurtured.

Studying a persona quite on its own is one means of better understanding an artist's works. Studying it in connection with the artist may take understanding still further, but it must be done guardedly (even with admittedly autobiographical works) because, first, the exigencies of form and technique inevitably affect the images of the persona, and second, the human being who is the artist is much more than merely an artist, while the artist, in turn, is much more than the persona. Moreover, the persona may have been intended to mislead us into thinking that the human being was more heroic, self-confident, spontaneously creative, wise, colorful, and accomplished than he or she actually was. Therefore, to apprehend the artist as a distinct human being one needs not just the works, but letters, public and private documents, and reminiscences of others as well. Even then the relation between person and persona must be regarded as provisional.

Under such constraints, what can be said concerning the persona evoked by the works of Ernst Krenek, the figure behind the dissembler's mask? As one reviews his works—musical, literary, or both—one finds two antithetical personae. In the discussion of *Sprung über den Schatten*, which seemed a surprising work to come from Krenek at the time, it was remarked that deep within the sober young classicist was a jester whom association with Anna Mahler brought out. Here, in fact, were manifestations of both personae: one a conservative man of intellect with an affinity for tradition, stability, and repose, whose preference in ideas and art is for proportion, balance, unity, and the rule of reason; the other an impulsive, cheeky rebel who delights in innovation, irregularity, unconventionality, even uproar, and is impatient with all forms of authority. What divides them is the opposition between order and freedom. What unites them is skepticism. The man of intellect is compelled by conscience and habits of thought to consider all sides of an issue and is thus forever confronting the pluralism of the universe. Much as edicts and axioms attract him, he is obliged to mistrust them. The rebel is skeptical from the habit of irreverence, a love of mischief-making, and his enjoyment of the spectacle of human folly.

Their skepticisms come to light in the irony that imbues many of Krenek's most significant works. It is conspicuous in libretti: the populace of *Der Sprung* enthusiastically elevates a rogue to the nation's presidency; Max, the serious composer of serious music, saves himself by adopting the carefree attitudes of Jonny, a purveyor of pop music; Karl, a man of peace and meditation, is forced to be the leading European military figure of his time; and so on. It is conspicuous, too, in the parodies such as *Potpourri*, wherein sophisticated music makes fun of itself. It is fundamental for both the text and the structure of *Sestina*, wherein chance is made to seem a consequence of necessity. It is inherent in the shocks and anti-

theses of the Second Symphony, the Sonata for Violin and Piano, and the Second Cello Concerto—the “wildness” that so perturbed Adorno. And it is the *raison d’être* of *Feiertags-Kantate*. Even where they seem most engaged, the personae evoked by Krenek’s works, whether man of intellect or rebel—or, on occasion, both—seem to be saying, “Yes, but. . . .” This could be an epigraph for *The Dissembler*.

A dissembler speaking in a medley of voices is an apt embodiment for two such contradictory personalities. Krenek’s dissembler, who was meant to hide him, actually serves to illuminate the artist and the man. In this Janus-like figure are exhibited contradictions that signify a fundamental division in both the public artist and the private individual. To be sure, one can admire systems, equations, and closed forms and yet be pleased by glittering particulars; one can be fascinated by the precision and symmetry of Webern’s works and yet be charmed by the bold irregularities of Schubert’s songs; one can respect and even seek to live by the stern morality of Kraus and yet have moments of mischievous pleasure in the amorality of Cocteau. But with Krenek such antinomies are so persistent and profound as quite to exceed the measure of inconsistencies ordinarily found in persons who, on the whole, have fairly equable and coherent personalities. Given this, we are able better to understand the unusual variety, the great strengths, and the weaknesses of his creative efforts.

Such a deep division in the self suggests a lack of confidence in one’s identity and social role. Without acknowledgement from others—and for Krenek this was erratic and unreliable—one becomes overly eager for recognition, touchy about one’s dignity, and easily hurt. One feels rejected, a stranger in otherwise ordinary circumstances, misunderstood and unappreciated. One becomes uncertain of one’s goals, as Krenek sometimes was with regard to the kind of music he should compose and the audience he should seek. One tends to lapse, as Krenek often did, into gloomy despair, despite there being no real and present danger or humiliation. One is inclined to be shy and timid and to turn inward, to have weak relations with others and be oppressed by loneliness.

Fortunately for Krenek, there were throughout his life powerful countervailing forces. As a child he knew unstinting parental love. At critical moments in his development he had guides or models such as Schünemann, Erdmann, Schnabel, Bekker, Kraus, Webern, and Winter. He also had loyal friends who appreciated his worth in Irene Erdmann, Emy Rubensohn, Adorno in the years before the war, Friedrich Gubler, Paul Sacher, Robert Erickson, Roger Sessions, Dimitri Mitropoulos, the Batschelet-Massinis, Friedrich Saathen, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Martin Zenck, and John Norman. In later years he had, too, an exceptionally strong and devoted wife in Gladys. But he suffered much that would weaken or confuse his sense of himself: being so often uprooted against his wish; being buffeted by the acceleration of change and the massed horrors of this violent, polluted, angry age;

wobbling in his religious faith and his relations with the church; having to endure the loss of social and financial supports and status through the banning of his music; his dismissal from Vassar; his obscurity at Hamline; the lack of steady employment and an adequate income when he moved to Los Angeles; the humiliation of teaching indifferent or inferior students at the Southern California School of Music and Art and shabby junior colleges; the mortification at the hands of younger men he tried to befriend; the limited acceptance of his music. Small wonder that Krenek often had difficulty mustering the psychic energy needed to cope with his antinomies and give unity and constancy to his art.

Total serialism would be especially alluring to one so divided. To the man of intellect it offered the quintessence of systems, abstract principles, and obdurate authority. To the rebel it offered beguiling surprises, vivid particulars, and at least the sound, if not the actuality, of contingency, even turbulence. For Krenek it meant an accommodation among the opposing forces of his imagination. For the listener it meant something very different. In the fourth lecture of *Horizons Circled* Krenek said:

Because in serial music gestalt is the result of orderings made prior to its creation, the free-wheeling inspirational invention of "themes" is virtually impossible, which also eliminates the concept of "development." . . . The interest that it evokes emanates from what it has to offer at any moment rather than from a context which may be followed intellectually by the listener's retaining in his memory musical shapes and profiles to be recognized later on. . . . Whatever structural features the listener seems to observe is [*sic*] a product of his own mental processes.¹⁷

With his predilection for discrete effects, Krenek might get pleasure from a seemingly random succession of curious sounds, but many a listener, including those sympathetic to radical innovations, would find it not pleasurable at all but simply wearying.

Many years before he ventured into serialism Krenek wrote that the listener can grasp music in three ways: sensually, emotionally, and structurally. That is, one can enjoy the simple charm of the sounds; one can follow a sequence of feelings evoked by conventions, such as the idea that music in a minor mode is "sad" or that certain rhythmical patterns express happiness; or one can apprehend the formal organization of the elements. In a lecture in 1936 he remarked that contemporary music is obscure because we do not understand its forms. We must, he said, transform our sensual perceptions into intellectual perceptions to gain this understanding. A few years later, in his inaugural lecture at Hamline, he said that persons little acquainted with contemporary music could learn to enjoy it by listening to the musical process, by which he meant the disclosure of the formal organization. As they experienced what he termed "the logic of process," their enjoyment would begin.

But transforming sensual perceptions into intellectual perceptions and experiencing the logic of process is, as he pointed out in *Horizons Circled*, just what the listener cannot do with serial music. Clearly in his earlier comments he meant that the listener should not be content with the simple charm of the sounds but should make an effort to grasp the forms. Now, it seemed, the sounds were all that were available to him, though many of them would not seem charming to the ordinary hearer. Ironically, Krenek's serialism, which lies beyond intellectual perceptions, gave rise in some quarters to the impression that his music—with a few exceptions, such as *Jonny* and *Reisebuch*—is excessively intellectual and consequently arid, utterly without grace or beauty. But there remains a great body of superb compositions in which the forces set in motion by the antinomies of his imagination are mastered and brought into an equilibrium, a synthesis, not mechanically by precoordination but by the operation of intuition, sensibility, and immense inventive power within a musically intelligible continuity having a "logic of process." Then Krenek solves the problems of "how to get from here to there" in ways that satisfy both sides of his nature. The result is ardor, splendor, and majesty.

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For over fifty years Krenek has been recognized by discerning colleagues, musicologists, and critics as one of the foremost composers of his time. Though not an innovator like Stravinsky and Schönberg, who altered the very course of music, he is nonetheless one of the Olympians. Why, then, is his music not more frequently performed?

The reason is not that his totally serial and some of his quasi-serial works have stamped him as inaccessible. Rather it is that, first, during most of his life Krenek, through a combination of diffidence and ill fortune, has been isolated from the centers of musical power and activity, and second, virtually all of his best music makes demands that a great many listeners are poorly prepared or simply reluctant to meet. His isolation has been particularly costly in the United States, where he has had neither a publisher or publisher's agent to push his music nor an appointment at a major conservatory or university such as Schönberg had at UCLA and Hindemith at Yale. As for the demands of his music, the descriptions herein should have made clear that Krenek's music tends to be unusually concentrated and to require alert and unwavering attention.

Much of his work has intense sensual appeal. *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* and *Statisch und ekstatisch*, for example, contain passages that should gratify listeners desiring sonic luxury. In his operas (especially the early ones), in songs such as those of *Gesänge des späten Jahres*, and in the works composed since 1970, in which he was reaching out to the audience, he created eloquently expressive music using the sublanguage of established associations—though always with the reservation that

music cannot mean anything but itself. Yet his abiding interest, even when assembling his collages, has always been in formal organizations, the aspect of music of least concern and appeal to the ordinary listener. That is why he emphasized intellectual perception. It is also why his remarks about listening to serial music are so astonishing, especially since interest in formal organizations was one reason why he began to compose this music.

But serialism aside, many listeners refuse to take up the challenge that his music presents to them; they want the assurance of ingratiating, easily recognizable melodies or a passive immersion in beautiful sounds. To be sure, audiences in Europe are much more accepting of contemporary music than audiences in the United States, for with government subsidies for operas and radio programs they have more opportunities to hear it. They also read about it more, since the major newspapers regularly print informative articles and interviews. Consequently, Krenek's music is performed fairly often in West Germany and Austria—but still nowhere near as often as his acknowledged stature would seem to warrant. Even in Europe, listeners do not get enough quick gratification from, say, a sumptuous sonority to motivate them to persevere and transform sensual perception into intellectual perception.

There is reason to believe that Krenek's music will be heard more often in the future and that audiences' forebodings and misapprehensions will give way to increased understanding and appreciation. In the conductor Lothar Zagrosek, Krenek has an advocate comparable with Mitropoulos. Recent performances, as of *Symeon der Stylit* in Salzburg, have been very successful. At this writing plans are under way to celebrate his ninetieth year with many programs featuring music from all periods of his life. His piano sonatas and string quartets are being issued on compact disc and other recordings are projected.

Even with such boosts, of course, Krenek's music may never have a large following, though it will certainly outlast much that is now in demand. Like Okeghem composing his complex works for the glory of God, Krenek has composed before all else for the glory of music, hoping that this glory will please others—the only exceptions being his music for the later operas and his declamations such as *The Dissembler*, where the music serves the text. In 1934, writing about Schönberg's commitment to the twelve-tone technique, he said: "One can see a moral achievement in the self-sacrificing way a composer sticks to a course he has seen as necessary, in his absolute consistency, which defies all obstacles."¹⁸ The same can be said about himself.

There are figures whose names are indelible in the history of their art but whose works are truly appreciated by a limited number. John Milton is one such artist. He lived much of his life in lonely isolation. He, too, saw his greatest works neglected by his contemporaries, often in favor of the rhymes of poetasters hovering about the court of Charles II. Yet those who approach his challenging poetry on its own terms find profound pleasure coupled with the recognition of grandeur. And so it

should be—shall be—with Krenek's music. His finest works, from the Second Symphony to the Second Cello Concerto, have an abundance, depth, and nobility to match the qualities of Milton's *Lycidas* and *Samson Agonistes*, while *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* can stand beside *Paradise Lost*.

Krenek's masterpieces, like Milton's, will endure and reward the deserving long after the partialities of his time have vanished.

EPILOGUE

*I have arrived, and I am safe.
Krenek, The Ballad of the Railroads*

On October 18, 1984, fifty years after it had been withdrawn, *Karl V* was performed at the Vienna State Opera House.

All the attention Krenek had received in Vienna—the Ring of Honor, the Cross of Austria, his honorary citizenship, the performances at festivals—were blemished in his eyes as long as the opera was ignored. As he told Egon Seefehlner, the head of the opera, in 1977, he was given decorations, but the public did not hear his music: should he return the decorations? Although the Viennese *did* occasionally hear his music, the issue of *Karl V* had become such an obsession with him that performances of other works in Vienna gave him only brief satisfaction. Now five decades of waiting were over, and the production (though not without faults in his view) was truly superb—probably the best ever. Moreover, the audience, knowing well from newspaper accounts how significant the occasion was, gave the opera the most positive reception that Krenek could recall. Applause lasted twenty-five minutes; there were a dozen curtain calls; and Krenek was given a tremendous greeting when he appeared on stage.

He had made his comment to Seefehlner while seeking to have the opera performed during his eightieth year. Seefehlner claimed it was too difficult. Krenek pointed out that smaller houses with fewer resources than the Vienna State Opera had done it well. Seefehlner still held off, now saying that he could not afford the necessary preparations. Finally he wrote on October 12, 1977, that he could not arrange a performance in 1980 but would consider it a matter of honor to produce the opera someday.

There the matter rested until early in 1983, when Krenek received a letter from Lorin Maazel, who had recently replaced Seefehlner. To his astonishment Krenek read that he was invited to compete for the honor of having a work performed by

the Vienna State Opera; if he wished, he could submit for consideration a scene of from five to ten minutes in length. Outraged, he wrote a stiff note declining the invitation and pointing out that although he had written twenty operas, only *Jonny spielt auf* had been performed in his native city—fifty-six years earlier—and that if they wanted a Krenek opera they still had *Karl V* waiting. To make sure that Maazel felt the sting of his anger, he sent copies of his note to the leading Viennese papers, the *London Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and several other publications.

Maazel read the letter in a newspaper before seeing his own copy and at once fired off a long cablegram. There had been a dreadful mistake: he had meant to ask Krenek to *judge* the competition, but this invitation had somehow been left out. The invitation to compete was merely for his information. Maazel followed this with a letter, with copies to the same newspapers, repeating his explanation. Calling Krenek “one of the greatest composers of our time,” he said that he had been wondering for months why *Karl V* had not been done in Vienna and that he hoped to correct the omission.

He made no promise, but in effect this exchange clinched the matter. A contract to produce the opera in its entirety was signed that summer, with Erich Leinsdorf selected to conduct it. Leinsdorf at once began studying the score with minute attention, tracing out the twelve-tone row in all its guises. He met with Krenek in Vienna during October; by then he knew the structure of the work so well that he was able to point out some errors in the score. They talked again the following February in Los Angeles, where Leinsdorf was guest conducting, and it was obvious that he had an exceptional command of the music.

Even so, there were times when it seemed the production might not come off. Maazel resigned under pressure in April, and Seefehlner was once more in charge. Otto Schenk, the stage director, thought the work too long. Then, when the opera was at last in rehearsal, Schenk’s plans for the lighting and for having the parts of the ghosts presented through loudspeakers offended Krenek. The tension between them mounted so high that Schenk threatened to resign. But in the end the production was splendid, for Schenk was a skillful director. The acting was uniformly excellent, and the movement of the crowds, made difficult by the divided stage, was handled well. Leinsdorf’s conducting was outstanding in its clarity and articulation, and all of the singers seemed to Krenek truly to understand the music. Günther Reich as Karl was wholly at ease with the twelve-tone music; Krenek, using his favorite adjective for high praise, called him “a colossal artist.”¹

In the end, vexation gave way to the keenest pleasure. Presiding at a backstage party on opening night, Schenk spoke with grace and charm, calling attention to the fact that Krenek had truly returned to his birthplace, something everyone present felt and was moved by. Although the party was large, it had the feeling of a family gathering. Admirers such as Charlotte Zelka, Beverly Grigsby, and Michael

Ingham had come from as far away as California. Even Krenk's Los Angeles eye doctor turned up. But one person was missing: Erich Leinsdorf, who had brought the music to such a level of excellence, had managed in the process to offend virtually all of the singers and members of the orchestra; without a word of explanation he rushed away after the last bow. But in the midst of the joyful tumult of toasts and tributes, his absence was quickly forgotten.

The production of *Karl V* was only part—though for Krenk the greatest part—of Vienna's welcome. In 1980 Helmut Zilk, Austrian minister of education and the arts, began the search for an apartment that the government could present to Krenk for his lifetime use. After some false starts it was arranged that the Kreneks should occupy the second floor of the apartment house at 6 Bernhardgasse in Mödling, where for many years Schönberg had made his home. Friedrich Saathen would oversee furnishing it.

At first Krenk's feelings were mixed. He was pleased by the attention, and certainly henceforth visits to Austria would be much easier, but he was also troubled. On a mild and sunny January day in 1983 he stood in front of his Palm Springs home with friends who were congratulating him on having two such agreeable places as Mödling and Palm Springs in which to live. He made no answer at first. Then his eyes filled with tears and he said sadly, "I don't know where I belong." During the silence that followed one could glimpse his loneliness and alienation. He had two dwellings and no home.

The summer of 1983 changed all that. The Kreneks arrived in Mödling to find that Saathen had done a superb job. The apartment was handsomely repapered and furnished, well equipped, and very comfortable. They could buy a car and leave it there. It was easy to get to their favorite vineyards and other places in and around Vienna. "We just *love* it!" Gladys reported. And then, of course, came the contract for *Karl V*.

Krenk had already made a major commitment to Vienna in 1980 when he decided that because there was more interest in his music among scholars and performers in Europe than in the United States, the manuscripts of his music still in his possession should be placed in the Vienna City Library, where his papers down to 1938 already reposed. In 1975 he had begun placing his post-1938 papers in the library of the University of California, San Diego, and it had been anticipated that the post-1938 music manuscripts would also be deposited there. But henceforth UCSD would get only his other papers; the Vienna-bound original scores could be photocopied. To support performances of his music, Krenk and Gladys changed their wills to establish a Krenk Gesellschaft (society). As if to prove how right the Kreneks were in making the change, Ernst Hilmar organized in the spring of 1982 a great exhibition at the Vienna History Museum of letters, photographs, manuscripts, scores, and other Krenk memorabilia from collections in the city and the national libraries. He also edited a handsome catalogue, which contained a graceful

tribute by Minister Zilk. While the exhibition was going on, the Thouvenel Quartet played all eight of Krenek's string quartets in the Schubert Room of the Vienna Concert House, with "colossal success."

There were some dreadful moments when it looked as if he might not be present for the triumph of the opera. In 1983, shortly after receiving Maazel's apology, he was made uneasy by an irregular heartbeat. Two prescribed medicines had such intense side effects that he could not take them. Thoroughly alarmed, he and Gladys consulted a specialist who told them that the irregularities were not serious, took him off the medicines, and urged him to live normally. Though reassured, Krenek could not live really normally because of his gallstones. For ten years he had been following a regime that severely limited his consumption of wine and forbade many of his favorite dishes. In February 1984, not long after Leinsdorf's visit, he suffered an attack of gallbladder trouble so painful that it was clear surgery could no longer be postponed. On April 10, 1984, he underwent in Los Angeles a very dangerous operation that, because of complications, lasted four and one-half hours. Once past it he recovered with astonishing speed. In less than a month he was able to attend a recital in Pasadena presented in his honor by Charlotte Zelka, and in late May he and Gladys headed for Mödling. Time had stiffened his body, impaired his hearing, and slowed his step, but he had not enjoyed such good health in many years. For the moment intimations of mortality were withdrawn. Then came October.

"The wheel of the world," Krenek had proclaimed in *Sestina*, "is turned by riddle-some chance." What if, by chance, the invitation to act as a judge *had* been included with the announcement of the competition for aspiring composers, thus depriving Krenek of the means so to embarrass the functionaries of the Vienna State Opera that they could no longer put him off? But the invitation was left out. *Karl V* was produced. The wheel of the world had turned in favor of one who had always been partial to riddles.

And with that, as he joined the singers on the stage on opening night and heard the thunder of as great an ovation as he ever received, he knew in his heart where he belonged. After wandering so far and so long, Ernst Krenek was home at last.

APPENDIX A : SESTINA

by Ernst Krenek

Vergangen Klang und Klage, sanfter Strom.
Die Schwingung der Sekunde wird zum Mass.
Was in Geschichte lebt, war's nur ein Zufall?
Verfall, Verhall, zerronnene Gestalt?
Die Stunde zeitigt Wandel, wendet Zeit.
Das Vorgeschrittne ordnet sich der Zahl.

In Schritten vorgeordnet durch die Zahl
gestaltet sich Gedanke, doch zum Strom
wird strenge Teilung, uhr-genaue Zeit.
Ist es vermessen, solches Mass von Mass
dem Leben aufzuzwingen, der Gestalt?
Der Zwang zerrinnt, erzeugt den neuen Zufall.

Das Rad der Welt dreht rätselhafter Zufall.
Enträtselt wird's durch die gerade Zahl.
Gefüge der Geschichte ist Gestalt,
die schichtenhaft zusammenfügt der Strom,
wenn er des Lebens Masse ohne Mass
hingiesst ins rätselhafte Tal der Zeit.

Noch nicht gekommen ist die Gnadenzeit.
Der Würfel fällt, die Zahl war nur ein Zufall.
Darin erfüllt sich unsres Wissens Mass.
O Teil vom Teile, Bruch und Summe, Zahl!
Zerronnen ist Gehalt, doch aus dem Strom
gewinnt Gesetz der Zahl Kristallgestalt.

In Kreis und Spiegel wandert rings Gestalt.
Was du nicht rückwärts wenden kannst, ist Zeit:
den du nicht zweimal kreuzen kannst, der Strom.
Das Tor ist zugefallen, nicht durch Zufall.

Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Ver-had, -". The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The tempo is marked "180". The piece is numbered "7." and "180". The notation includes various ornaments (trills, mordents, grace notes) and dynamic markings (p, f, mf, pp, ff). The piece is marked "7." and "180".

A page from the score of *Sestina*.

Das Unvermessene bedarf der Zahl.
Im Ungezählten missen wir das Mass.

O grenzenlose Fülle, Mass für Mass,
o Gleichgewicht, o Zirkelspiel, Gestalt!
Die Ewigkeit verwendet keine Zahl.
Das Ende naht, wir haben keine Zeit.
Was uns von oben zufällt, ist kein Zufall
vom ewig unermessnen Gnadenstrom.

Wie ich mit Mass bezwinde Klang und Zeit,
entflieht Gestalt im unermessnen Zufall.
Kristall der Zahl entlässt des Lebens Strom.

Bygone are sound and mourning, tender stream.
Vibration of the second becomes the measure.
What lives in history, was it only chance?
Decline, fading sound, vanished shape?
The hour causes change, turns the time.
What looks ahead subordinates itself to number.

In stages preordained by number
thought takes shape, but a stream
is (the result of) strict division, of clocklike, precise time.
Is it presuming to force such an extent of measure
on life, on shape?
Force vanishes, brings forth new chance.

The wheel of the world is turned by riddlesome chance.
It is unriddled by even number.
The texture of history is shape
piled up in layers by the stream,
as it outpours life's substance without measure
into the riddlesome valley of time.

Not yet has come the time
of Grace. The die is cast, the number was but chance.
Herein (we see) fulfilled our wisdom's measure.
O part of parts, fraction, sum, number!
Content has vanished, but out of the stream
the law of numbers gains crystalline shape.

In circle and mirror shape
travels 'round. What you can not turn back, is time:
which you can not cross twice, the stream.
The door fell shut, and not by chance.
The unmeasured stands in need of number,
in the unnumbered we miss measure.

O fullness without bounds, measure by measure,
O equipoise, O circle game, O shape!
Eternity employs no number.

The end is nigh, we have no time.
What falls (to our share) from above, it comes by chance,
falling from Grace's eternally unmeasured stream.

As I with measure master sound and time,
shape recedes in unmeasured chance.
The crystal of number releases life's stream.

(translation by Ernst Krenek)

In composing his translation Krenek tried to be as literal as he could be while reproducing the position of the key words of the original. Even so, many of the complex wordplays could not be reproduced.

APPENDIX B: ERNST KRENEK'S COMPOSITIONS

Compositions are listed in the order of the opus numbers assigned by the composer. For additional information regarding manuscripts, first performances, and unnumbered student works, consult Garrett H. Bowles, *Ernst Krenek: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1989).

Unless otherwise indicated, the texts of works using words are in the same language as their titles. When works use words from more than one language the bulk of the text, unless otherwise indicated, is in the language of the title.

- 1a. *Doppelfuge* (Double fugue). For piano. 1917. Unpublished.
- 1b. *Tanzstudie* (Dance study). For piano. 1920. Universal Edition.
2. Piano Sonata no. 1. 1919. Universal Edition.
3. Sonata for Violin and Piano. 1920. Unpublished.
4. *Serenade*. For clarinet, violin, viola, and cello. 1919. Assmann.
5. Four Sonatinas for Piano. 1920. Unpublished.
6. String Quartet no. 1. 1921. Universal Edition.
7. Symphony no. 1. 1921. Universal Edition.
8. String Quartet no. 2. 1921. Assman.
9. *Lieder*. For voice and piano. Texts by Gerd Hans Goering. 1922. Universal Edition.
10. Concerto Grosso no. 1. For flute, clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola, cello, and string orchestra. 1922. Withdrawn.
11. *Sinfonische Musik für 9 Soloinstrumente* (Symphonic music for Nine Solo Instruments). For chamber orchestra. 1922. Universal Edition.
12. Symphony no. 2. 1922. Universal Edition.
13. *Toccata und Chaconne*. For piano. 1922. Universal Edition.
- 13a. *Eine kleine Suite* (A little suite). An appendix to 13. For piano. 1922. Universal Edition and Associated Music Publishers.
- 13b. *Lieder*. For voice and piano. Text by Karl Kraus. 1922. Unpublished.
14. *Die Zwingburg* (The tyrant's castle). Scenic cantata in one act. Text by Fritz Demuth, reworked by Franz Werfel. 1922. Universal Edition.

15. *Lieder*. For voice and piano. Texts by Guido Gezelle and Franz Werfel. 1922. Universal Edition.
16. Symphony no. 3. 1922. Universal Edition.
17. *Der Sprung über den Schatten* (The leap over the shadow). Comic opera in three acts. Text by the composer. 1923. Universal Edition.
18. Piano Concerto no. 1. 1923. Universal Edition.
19. *Lieder*. For voice and piano. Texts by Otfried Krzyzanowski and Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock. 1923. Universal Edition.
20. String Quartet no. 3. 1923. Universal Edition.
21. *Orpheus und Eurydike*. Opera in three acts. Text by Oskar Kokoschka. 1923. Universal Edition.
22. *Drei Chöre a cappella* (Three choruses a cappella). For mixed choir. Texts by Matthias Claudius. 1923. Universal Edition.
23. *Sinfonische Musik* no. 2 (Symphonic music no. 2). [Also known as *Divertimento*.] For chamber orchestra. 1923. Withdrawn.
24. String Quartet no. 4. 1924. Assmann.
25. Concerto Grosso no. 2. For violin, viola, cello, and orchestra. 1924. Universal Edition.
26. Two Suites for Piano. 1924. Universal Edition.
27. Concertino. For flute, violin, harpsichord, and string orchestra. 1924. Universal Edition.
28. *Kleine Suite* (Little suite). For clarinet and piano. 1924. Bärenreiter.
29. Violin Concerto no. 1. 1924. Universal Edition.
30. *Lieder*. For voice and piano. Texts by Gerd Hans Goering and Hans Reinhart. 1924. Unpublished.
- 30a. *Lieder*. For mezzo-soprano, clarinet, and string quartet. Text by Emile Verhaeren. 1924. Unpublished.
31. *Sieben Orchesterstücke* (Seven pieces for orchestra). 1924. Universal Edition.
32. *Vier kleine Männerchöre a cappella mit Altsolo* (Four little male choruses a cappella with alto solo). Texts by Friedrich Hölderlin. 1924. Universal Edition.
33. Violin Sonata no. 1. For unaccompanied violin. 1924. Assmann.
34. *Sinfonie für Blasinstrumente und Schlagwerk* (Symphony for wind instruments and percussion). 1925. Universal Edition.
35. *Die Jahreszeiten* (The seasons). For mixed chorus a cappella. Text by Friedrich Hölderlin. 1925. Universal Edition and Associated Music Publishers.
36. *Bluff*. Operetta in three acts. Text by George Gribble and Carl von Levetzow (in German). 1925. Withdrawn.
37. *Mammon*. Ballet. Text by Béla Balasz (in German). 1925. Universal Edition.
38. *Der vertauschte Cupido* (The substitute cupid). Ballet based on *Les fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour* by Jean Philippe Rameau. 1925. Universal Edition.
39. *Fünf Klavierstücke* (Five piano pieces). 1925. Universal Edition.
40. *Vom lieben Augustin* (About dear Augustine). Incidental music for accordion, guitar, and clarinet to a folk play by "Dietzenschmidt" (pseudonym for Anton Schmidt). 1925. Universal Edition.
41. *Die Rache des verhöhten Liebhabers* (The revenge of the spurned lover). Incidental music for voice, violin, and piano to a puppet play by Ernst Toller. 1925. Unpublished.

42. *Des Gotteskind* (The divine child). Incidental music to a radio play. 1925. Unpublished.
43. *Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit* (The triumph of feeling). Incidental music for orchestra to the play by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. 1925. Unpublished.
- 43a. *Suite aus der Musik zu Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit* (Suite from the music for The Triumph of Feeling). For soprano and orchestra. 1927. Universal Edition.
- 43a. *Wechsellied zum Tanz* (Change-song at the dance). For soprano and piano. (Based on material from op. 43.) 1926. Universal Edition.
44. *Drei lustige Märsche* (Three merry marches). For band. 1926. Universal Edition.
45. *Jonny spielt auf* (Jonny plays on). Opera in two acts. Text by the composer. 1926. Universal Edition.
- 45a. *Rosalinde*. For voice and piano. 1926. Unpublished.
46. *Ein Sommernachtstraum* (A midsummer night's dream). Incidental music for chamber orchestra to Shakespeare's play. 1926. Universal Edition.
- 46a. *Herr Reinecke Fuchs*. Incidental music for voice, clarinet, trumpet, violin, piano, and percussion to a play by Heinrich Anton (pseudonym for Heinrich Simon). 1931. Unpublished.
47. *Vier Chöre a cappella* (Four choruses a cappella). For mixed chorus. Texts by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. 1926. Universal Edition.
48. *O Lacrymosa*. Three songs for voice and piano. Texts by Rainer Maria Rilke (in German). 1926. Universal Edition.
- 48a. *O Lacrymosa*. The same arranged for soprano and an accompaniment of two flutes, two clarinets, two bassoons, and harp. 1926. Universal Edition.
49. *Der Diktator* (The dictator). Opera in one act. Text by the composer. 1926. Universal Edition.
50. *Das geheime Königreich* (The secret kingdom). Opera in one act. Text by the composer. 1927. Universal Edition.
51. *Kleine Kantate* (Little cantata). For mixed chorus a cappella. Text by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. 1927. Lost.
- 51a. *Intrada*. For clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, two horns, trombone, and timpani. 1927. Unpublished.
52. *Marlborough's'en va-t-en guerre* (Marlborough goes to war). Incidental music for piano and percussion to a puppet play by Marcel Archaud (German translation by the composer). 1927. Unpublished.
53. *Gesänge nach alten Gedichten* (Songs after older poets). Four songs for mezzo-soprano and piano. Texts by Johann Christian Günther, Georg Rudolf Weckherlin, and Paul Fleming. 1927. Universal Edition.
- 53a. *Gesänge nach alten Gedichten*. The same with accompaniment arranged for woodwinds. 1927. Universal Edition.
54. *Postpourri für Orchester*. 1927; revised 1954. Universal Edition.
55. *Schwergewicht, oder Die Ehre der Nation* (Heavyweight, or The pride of the nation). Operetta in one act. Text by the composer. 1927. Universal Edition.
56. *Gesänge* (Songs). For baritone and piano. Texts by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. 1927. Universal Edition.
57. *Monolog der Stella* (Stella monologue). Concert aria for soprano and piano. Text by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. 1928. Universal Edition.

- 57a. *Monolog der Stella*. The same with accompaniment arranged for orchestra. 1928. Universal Edition.
58. *Kleine Sinfonie* (Little symphony). For chamber orchestra. 1928. Universal Edition.
59. Piano Sonata no. 2. 1928. Universal Edition and Associated Music Publishers.
60. *Leben des Orest* (Life of Orestes). Opera in five acts. Text by the composer. 1929. Universal Edition.
61. *Gemischte Chöre* (Mixed choruses). For mixed chorus a cappella. Texts by Gottfried Keller. 1929. Universal Edition.
62. *Reisebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen* (Travel book from the Austrian Alps). Song cycle for voice and piano. Text by the composer. 1929. Universal Edition.
- 62b. *Lieder aus Reisebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen* (Songs from the Travel book from the Austrian Alps). Eight songs with accompaniment arranged for orchestra. 1973. Universal Edition.
63. *Triphantasie* (Trio fantasy). For violin, cello, and piano. 1929. Withdrawn.
64. *Fiedellieder* (Fiddle songs). For medium voice and piano. Texts by Theodor Storm and Theodor Mommsen. 1930. Universal Edition.
65. String Quartet no. 5. 1930. Universal Edition.
66. *Kehraus um St. Stephan* (Cleaning out around St. Stephen's). Opera in two acts. Text by the composer. 1930. Bärenreiter.
67. *Durch die Nacht* (Through the night). For soprano and piano. Text by Karl Kraus. 1931. Universal Edition.
- 67a. *Durch die Nacht*. The same with accompaniment arranged for orchestra. 1931. Universal Edition.
68. *Die Nachtigall* (The nightingale). For soprano and piano. Text by Karl Kraus. 1931. Universal Edition.
- 68a. *Die Nachtigall*. The same with accompaniment arranged for two flutes and strings. 1931. Universal Edition.
69. Theme and Thirteen Variations. For orchestra. 1931. Universal Edition.
70. *Vier Bagatellen* (Four bagatelles). For piano four hands. 1931. Unpublished.
- 70a. *Kleine Blasmusik* (Little music for winds). *Vier Bagatellen* arranged for band. 1931. Universal Edition and Associated Music Publishers.
71. *Gesänge des späten Jahres* (Songs of the late years). For voice and piano. Text by the composer. 1931. Universal Edition.
72. *Kantate von der Vergänglichkeit des Irdischen* (Cantata on the transitoriness of earthly things). For soprano, mixed chorus, and piano. Texts by Andreas Gryphius, Martin Opitz, Johann Klay, and Paul Fleming. 1932. Universal Edition.
73. *Karl V*. Opera in two parts. Text by the composer. 1933; revised 1954. Universal Edition.
- 73a. *Fragmente aus dem Bühnenwerk Karl V* (Fragments from the stage work Karl V). For soprano and orchestra. 1933/1936. Universal Edition.
74. *Jagd im Winter* (Hunt in winter). For male chorus, four horns, and timpani. Text by Franz Grillparzer. 1933. Unpublished.
75. *Das Schweigen* (Silence). For bass and piano. Text by Eberhard Friedrich Freiherr von Gemminger. 1933. Unpublished.
76. *Während der Trennung* (During separation). For mezzo-soprano, baritone, and piano. Text by Paul Fleming. 1933. Unpublished.

77. *Cefalo e Procri* (Cephalus and Procris). Opera in three scenes with prologue. Text based on Ovid by Rinaldo Küfflerle (translated into German by the composer). 1934. Universal Edition.
- 77a. Four Austrian Folksongs. Arranged for mixed chorus a cappella. 1934. Unpublished.
- 77b. Italian Ballads. Arranged for voice and piano (in Italian). 1934. Unpublished.
78. String Quartet no. 6. 1936. Universal Edition.
- 78a. Adagio and Fugue. Movements 4 and 5 of 78 arranged for string orchestra. 1936. Universal Edition.
79. *Zwölf Variationen in drei Sätzen* (Twelve variations in three movements). For piano. 1937; revised 1940 and 1957. Assmann.
80. *Campo Marzio*. Overture for orchestra. 1937. Unpublished.
- 80a. *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (The crowning of Poppea). Opera. Text by Giovanni Francesco Busenello; music by Claudio Monteverdi, reorchestrated by Ernst Krenek. 1936. Universal Edition.
- 80b. *L'incoronazione di Poppea* Suite. 1936. Universal Edition.
- 80c. *Ball bei Prinz Eugen, barocke Tanzmusik* (Ball at the residence of Prince Eugene, baroque dance music). Arrangement for piano of twelve dance tunes from the baroque period. 1935. Universal Edition.
81. Piano Concerto no. 2. 1937. Universal Edition.
82. *Lieder nach Worten von Franz Kafka* (Songs with words by Franz Kafka). For voice and piano. 1938. Universal Edition and Schott.
83. Twelve Short Piano Pieces Written in the Twelve-Tone Technique. 1938. Schirmer.
84. Suite, cello. 1939. Schirmer.
- 84a. *The Night Is Far Spent*. For voice and piano. Text from Saint Matthew. 1939. Schirmer.
85. *Eight-Column Line*. Music for a ballet by Trude Kaschmann and Alwin Nikolais. For chamber ensemble. 1939. Unpublished.
- 85a. *Two Themes by Handel*. Arranged for oboe and piano. 1939. Belwin.
- 85b. *Country Dance*. By "Thornton Winsloe" (pseudonym for Ernst Krenek). For four clarinets. 1939. Belwin.
- 85c. *Flute Players' Serenade*. By "Thornton Winsloe." For four flutes. 1939. Belwin.
- 85d. Sonata. By "Thornton Winsloe." For bass clarinet and piano. 1939. Belwin.
- 85e. Allegro sinfonico. For woodwind quintet. 1939. Belwin.
- 85f. Rhapsody, Clarinet and Piano. By "Thornton Winsloe." 1939. Belwin.
- 85g. Ballade, Horn and Piano. By "Dewey Donaldson." 1939. Belwin.
- 85h. Nocturne, Flute and Piano. 1939. Belwin.
- 85i. Sarabande, Oboe and Piano. By "Thornton Winsloe." 1939. Belwin.
86. *Sinfonisches Stück* (Symphonic piece). For string orchestra. 1939. Schott/Universal Edition.
87. Two Choruses on Elizabethan Poems. For women's chorus. Texts by William Drummond and Sir Walter Raleigh. 1939. Rongwen.
88. Little Concerto. For piano and organ (or piano) and chamber orchestra. 1940. Unpublished.
89. *Proprium missae in festo SS. Innocentium martyrum (die 28 Decembris)*. For women's chorus a cappella. Text from the Bible (in Latin). 1940. Mills Music.

90. *Tarquin*. Opera in two parts. Text by Emmet Lavery. 1940. Unpublished.
- 90a. *A Contrapuntal Excursion Through the Centuries*. For student string orchestra. 1941. Unpublished.
91. *La corona*. Cantata for mezzo-soprano, baritone, organ, and percussion. Text by John Donne (in English). 1941. Bärenreiter.
- 91a. *The Holy Ghost's Ark*. For mezzo-soprano, oboe, clarinet, viola, and cello. Text by John Donne. 1941. Unpublished.
- 92, no. 1. Sonata for Organ. 1941. H. W. Gray.
- 92, no. 2a. Sonatina for Flute and Viola. 1942. Unpublished.
- 92, no. 2b. The same arranged for flute and clarinet. 1942. Bärenreiter.
- 92, no. 3. Sonata for Viola. 1942. Bomart.
- 92, no. 4. Piano Sonata no. 3. 1943. Associated Music Publishers.
93. *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae*. For mixed chorus a cappella. Text from the Tenebrae service of the Catholic church. 1942. Bärenreiter.
94. *I Wonder as I Wander*. For orchestra. Based on a "folk tune" actually composed by John Jacob Niles. 1942. Unpublished.
95. *Cantata for Wartime*. For women's chorus and orchestra. Text by Herman Melville. 1943. Schott/Universal Edition.
96. String Quartet no. 7. 1944. Universal Edition.
97. *Five Prayers for Women's Voices*. For women's chorus a cappella. Text by John Donne. 1944. Universal Edition.
98. *The Ballad of the Railroads*. For voice and piano. Text by the composer. 1944. Bärenreiter.
99. Sonata for Violin and Piano. 1945. Universal Edition.
100. *Hurricane Variations*. For piano. Based on a theme by Virginia Seay. 1944. Unpublished.
101. *Tricks and Trifles. Hurricane Variations* arranged for orchestra. 1945. Unpublished.
102. *Santa Fe Timetable*. For mixed chorus a cappella. Text from the timetable of the Atcheson, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. 1945. Bärenreiter.
103. *Aegrotavit Ezechias* (The deliverance of Hezekiah). Motet for three-voice women's chorus and piano. Text from Isaiah (in Latin). 1945. Mobart.
104. Etude. For coloratura and contralto. Text of nonsense syllables. 1945. Unpublished.
105. *Symphonic Elegy*. For string orchestra. 1946. Elkan-Vogel.
- 105a. *Sargasso*. Ballet music from *Symphonic Elegy*. 1965. Unpublished.
106. *In paradisum*. Motet for three-voice women's ensemble a cappella. 1946. Broude.
107. Piano Concerto no. 3. 1946. Schott/Universal Edition.
108. Trio for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano. 1946. Associated Music Publishers.
109. *O Would I Were*. Canon for mixed chorus a cappella. 1946. Mercury.
110. Eight Piano Pieces. 1946. Mercury.
111. *What Price Confidence?* Chamber opera in nine scenes. Text by the composer. 1945. Bärenreiter.
112. *Four Hopkins Songs*. For tenor and piano. Texts by Gerard Manley Hopkins. 1947. Bärenreiter.
113. Symphony no. 4. 1947. Unpublished.

114. Piano Sonata no. 4. 1948. Bomart.
115. Violin Sonata no. 2. For unaccompanied violin. 1948. Assmann.
- 115a. *Remember Now*. Motet for three-voice women's ensemble and piano. Text from Ecclesiastes. 1947. Unpublished.
116. Five Short Pieces for String Orchestra or String Quartet. 1948. Bärenreiter.
117. Sonata for Viola and Piano. 1948. Mills Music.
118. String Trio. 1949. Hansen.
119. Symphony no. 5. 1949. Schott/Universal Edition.
120. *George Washington Variations*. For piano. 1950. Southern.
121. Piano Sonata no. 5. 1950. Unpublished.
122. *Parrula corona musicalis ad honorem J.S. Bach*. For string trio. 1950. *Bach Quarterly* 2 (October 1971): 20–31.
123. Piano Concerto no. 4. 1950. Bärenreiter.
124. Double Concerto for Violin and Piano. 1950. Marks.
125. *Dark Waters*. Opera in one act. Text by the composer. 1951. Bärenreiter.
126. Concerto for Harp. 1951. Universal Edition.
127. Concerto for Two Pianos. 1951. Bärenreiter.
- 127a. Invention. For flute and clarinet. 1950. *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 93 (1 March 1953): 115.
128. Piano Sonata no. 6. 1951. Unpublished.
129. *Medea*. Monologue for mezzo-soprano and orchestra. Text from an adaptation by Robinson Jeffers of *Medea* by Euripides. 1951; revised 1952. Bärenreiter.
130. Wind Quintet. 1952. Unpublished. Exists only on a tape at WDR, Cologne.
131. *Sinfonietta a Brasileira*. For string orchestra. 1952. Universal Edition.
132. Two Sacred Songs. For medium voice and piano. Texts from Ecclesiastes and Psalm 104. 1952. Bärenreiter.
133. Cello Concerto no. 1. 1953. Bärenreiter.
134. *Scenes from the West*. For school orchestra. Mills Music.
135. *Phantasiestück* (Fantasy piece). For cello and piano. 1953. Unpublished.
136. *Miniature*. For piano. 1953. *New Mexico Quarterly* 23 (Spring 1953), 38–39.
137. *Sinfonie Pallas Athene*. 1954. Taken from the opera, op. 144. 1954. Schott/Universal Edition.
138. Four Choruses for Mixed Chorus and Organ or Piano. 1953. Mills Music.
139. *Twenty Miniatures*. For piano. (Includes op. 136.) 1954. Hansen.
- 139a. *Six for Two*. Six miniatures from op. 139 arranged for two pianos. 1954. Unpublished.
140. Violin Concerto no. 2. 1954. Schott/Universal Edition.
141. *Veni Sanctificator*. Motet for three-voice mixed ensemble a cappella. 1954. Schott.
142. *Eleven Transparencies*. For orchestra. 1954. Schott/Universal Edition.
143. *Proprium missae in domnica tertia in quadagesima*. For three-voice mixed chorus a cappella. 1955. Schott.
144. *Pallas Athene weint* (Pallas Athena weeps). Opera in three acts. Text by the composer. 1953; revised 1955. Schott/Universal Edition.
145. *Capriccio*. For cello and orchestra. 1955. Schott/Universal Edition.
146. Seven Easy Pieces. For string orchestra. 1955. Schott.
147. Suite for Flute and Piano. 1954. Broude.

- 147a. Suite for Flute and String Orchestra. 1954. Broude.
148. Suite for Clarinet and Piano. 1955. Broude.
- 148a. Suite for Clarinet and String Orchestra. 1955. Broude.
149. *Psalmenverse zur Kommunion für das ganze Kirchenjahr* (Psalms for communion for the entire church year). For mixed chorus a cappella. Texts from Psalms and the Gospel of Saint John (in Latin). 1955. Schott.
150. Sonata for Harp. 1955. Bärenreiter.
151. *Ich singe wieder, wenn es tagt* (I sing again as it dawns). For chorus with string orchestra or string quintet. Text from Walther von der Vogelweide. 1956. Schott/Universal Edition.
152. *Spiritus intelligentiae, Sanctus*. Oratorio for Pentecost for two singers, speaker, and electronic tape. 1956. Universal Edition.
153. *The Belltower*. Opera in one act. Text by the composer based on a story by Herman Melville. 1956. Bärenreiter.
154. *Tanzstudie* (Dance Study). For violin, piano, celesta, vibraphone, xylophone, and percussion. 1956. Unpublished.
155. *Egregii, carissimi*. Canon for two voices. Text by the composer (in Latin). 1956. Unpublished.
156. Sonatina for Oboe. 1956. Broude.
157. *Monologue*. For solo clarinet. 1956. Broude.
158. Divertimento. For orchestra. 1956. Broude.
159. *Guten Morgen, Amerika* (Good morning, America). For mixed chorus a cappella. Text from Carl Sandburg, translated by the composer. 1956. Schott.
160. *Kette, Kreis, und Spiegel, sinfonische Zeichnung* (Circle, chain, and mirror, symphonic design). For orchestra. 1957. Bärenreiter.
161. *Sestina*. For soprano and ensemble. Text by the composer (in German). 1957. Bärenreiter.
162. *Marginal Sounds*. Ensemble. (Incorporates *Tanzstudie*, op. 154.) 1957. Broude.
- 162a. *Jest of Cards*. Ballet music arranged from op. 162 for piano, violin, cello, and percussion. 1962. Unpublished.
163. *Pentagramm*. For wind quintet. (Revision of op. 130.) 1957. Bärenreiter.
164. Suite for Guitar. 1957. Doblinger.
165. *Missa duodecim tonorum*. For mixed chorus and organ. 1957. Gregorian Institute.
166. *Echoes from Austria*. Folk songs arranged for piano. 1958. Broude.
167. *Hexahedron*. Six untitled pieces for chamber ensemble. 1958. Unpublished.
168. *Sechs Vermessene* (Six measurements). Untitled pieces for piano. 1958. Bärenreiter.
169. *Sechs Motetten nach Worten von Franz Kafka* (Six motets on texts by Franz Kafka). For mixed chorus a cappella. 1959. Bärenreiter.
170. *Quaestio temporis* (A question of time). For orchestra. 1959. Bärenreiter.
171. *Flötenstück neunphasig* (Flute piece in nine phases). For flute and piano. 1959. Bärenreiter.
172. *Hausmusik: Sieben Stücke für die sieben Tage der Woche* (House music: Seven Pieces for the Seven Days of the Week). For various combinations of voice, piano, recorders, violin, and guitar. 1959. Bärenreiter.
173. *Basler Massarbeit* (Basel made-to-measure). For two pianos. 1960. Bärenreiter.

174. *Children's Songs: Three Madrigals and Three Motets*. For soprano and alto voices a cappella. Texts by William Shakespeare, Robert Herrick, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson and from the Bible. 1960. Broude.
175. *The Flea*. For soprano or tenor and piano. Text by John Donne. 1960. Marks.
176. *Jedermann*. Incidental music for two voices, chorus, and orchestra to the play by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. 1961. Unpublished.
177. *From Three Make Seven*. For orchestra. 1961; revised 1968. Bärenreiter.
178. *Jedermann*. Film score developed from op. 176. 1961. Unpublished.
179. *Ausgerechnet und verspielt* (Computed and confounded). Television opera in one act. Text by the composer. 1962. Bärenreiter.
180. *Alpbach Quintet*. Ballet music for wind quintet and percussion. 1962. Universal Edition.
181. *Kanon Igor Stravinsky zum achtzigsten Geburtstag* (Canon for the eightieth birthday of Igor Stravinsky). For two-voice chorus. Text by the composer (in Latin). 1962. Bärenreiter.
182. *Näch wie vor der Reihe nach* (Serially as before). For orchestra and two speakers. Text by the composer. 1962. Bärenreiter.
183. Toccata. For accordion. 1962. Pagani.
184. *Cello Studien* (Cello studies). For solo cello and cello quartet. 1963. Bärenreiter.
185. *San Fernando Sequence*. For electronic tape. 1963. Unpublished.
186. *Der goldene Bock* (The golden ram). [Also titled *Chysomallos*.] Opera in four acts. Text by the composer. 1963. Bärenreiter.
- 186a. *O Holy Ghost*. Motet for mixed chorus a cappella. Text by John Donne. 1964. Bärenreiter.
187. *Fibonacci Mobile*. For string quartet and piano four hands. 1964. Bärenreiter.
188. *König Oedipus* (King Oedipus). Incidental music to *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Oedipus at Colonus* by Sophocles. 1964. Unpublished.
189. *Wechselrahmen* (Changing frames). For soprano and piano. Text by Emil Barth. 1965. Bärenreiter.
190. *Quintona*. For electronic tape. 1965. Unpublished.
191. *Quintina über die fünf Vokale* (Quintina on the five vowels). For soprano, ensemble, and electronic tape. Text by the composer. 1965. Bärenreiter.
192. *Der Zauberspiegel* (The magic mirror). Television opera in fourteen scenes. Text by the composer. 1966. Bärenreiter.
193. *Stücke* (Pieces). For oboe and piano. 1966. Bärenreiter.
194. *Glauben und Wissen* (To believe and to know). For mixed chorus, four speakers, and orchestra. Text by the composer. 1966. Unpublished.
195. *Proprium für das Dreifaltigkeitsfest* (Proprium Missae for Trinity Sunday). For soprano, mixed chorus, two trumpets, timpani, and organ. 1967. Bärenreiter.
196. *Horizon Circled*. For orchestra. 1967. Bärenreiter.
197. Piano Piece in Eleven Parts. 1967. Unpublished.
198. *Pieces*. For trombone and piano. 1967. Bärenreiter.
199. *Perspectives*. For orchestra. 1967. Bärenreiter.
200. *Exercises of a Late Hour*. For orchestra, solo strings, and electronic tape. 1967. Bärenreiter.
201. *Instant Remembered*. For soprano, reader, electronic tape, and orchestra. Texts by Plato, Søren Kierkegaard, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Rainer Maria

- Rilke, Seneca, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Karl Kraus, and the composer. 1968. Bärenreiter.
202. *Proprium Missae per a le festa de la nativitat de la mare de Deu (8 de setembre)* (Proprium Missae for the birthday of Saint Mary). For mixed chorus, instruments, and organ. (In Catalan.) 1968. Unpublished.
 203. *Six Profiles*. For orchestra. 1968. Bärenreiter.
 204. *Deutsche Messe* (German mass). For mixed chorus, clarinet, trumpet, two trombones, timpani, and percussion. 1968. Bärenreiter.
 205. *Fivefold Enfoldment*. For orchestra. 1969. Bärenreiter.
 206. *Sardakai, oder Das kommt davon* (Sardakai, or That gets away). Opera in eleven scenes. Text by the composer. 1969. Bärenreiter.
 207. *Doppelt beflügeltes Band* (Tape and double). For two pianos and electronic tape. 1970. Bärenreiter.
 208. *Messe Gib uns den Frieden* (Mass Give us peace). For chorus and orchestra. 1970. Bärenreiter.
 209. Duo. For flute, double bass, and electronic tape. 1970. Unpublished.
 210. *Three Sacred Pieces and Three Lessons*. For mixed chorus a cappella. Texts for the sacred pieces from Ecclesiastes and Proverbs; texts for the lessons by the composer. 1971. Broude.
 211. *Zehn Choralvorspiele* (Ten choral preludes). For organ. 1971. Bärenreiter.
 212. *Orga-nastro*. For organ and electronic tape. 1971. Bärenreiter.
 213. *Kitharaulos*. For oboe, harp, and chamber orchestra. 1971. Bärenreiter.
 - 213a. *Aulokithara*. For oboe, harp, and electronic tape. (The oboe and harp parts of op. 213 with a new taped accompaniment.) 1972. Bärenreiter.
 214. *Statisch und ekstatisch* (Static and ecstatic). For orchestra. 1972. Bärenreiter.
 215. *Zeitlieder* (Time songs). For mezzo-soprano and string quartet. Texts by Renata Pandula. 1972. Unpublished.
 216. *Lieder*. For soprano and piano. Texts by Lilly von Sauter. 1972. Unpublished.
 217. *Flaschenpost vom Paradies, oder Der englische Ausflug* (Bottled mail from paradise, or The English excursion). Television piece for voices, mimes, dancers, speakers, piano, percussion, and electronic tape. 1973. Unpublished.
 218. *Spätlese* (Late harvest). Song cycle for baritone and piano. Texts by the composer. 1973. Bärenreiter.
 219. *Von vorn herein* (From the outset). For two pianos and chamber orchestra. 1974. Universal Edition.
 220. *Auf- und Ablehnung* (Rebellion and rejection). For orchestra. 1974. Bärenreiter.
 221. *Feiertags-Kantate* (Anniversary cantata). For speaker, mezzo-soprano, baritone, chorus, and orchestra. Text assembled by the composer. 1975. Universal Edition.
 222. *Two Silent Watchers*. For voice and piano. Text by Mimi Rudolph. 1975. Unpublished.
 223. *Four Winds Suite*. For organ. 1975. Bärenreiter.
 224. *Dream Sequence*. For symphonic band. 1976. Universal Edition.
 225. *Acco-music*. For accordion. 1976. Ars Nova.
 226. *I Ask'd a Thief; I Heard an Angel*. For mixed chorus a cappella. Texts by William Blake. 1976. Broude.

227. *They Knew What They Wanted*. For speaker, oboe, piano, percussion, and electronic tape. Text by the composer. 1977. Broude.
228. *Albumblatt* (Album leaf). For voice and piano. Text by the composer. 1977. Unpublished.
229. *The Dissembler*. Monologue for baritone and ensemble. Text by the composer, with quotations from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Krenek, Euripides, the Psalms, the Catholic Missal, and Ecclesiastes. 1978. Bärenreiter.
230. Organ Concerto no. 1. With string orchestra. 1979. Universal Edition.
231. *Opus 231*. For violin and organ. 1979. Universal Edition.
232. *Im Tal der Zeit* (In the valley of time). For orchestra. 1979. Bärenreiter.
233. String Quartet no. 8. 1981. Bärenreiter.
234. *Arc of Life*. For chamber orchestra. 1981. Bärenreiter.
235. Organ Concerto no. 2. 1982. Bärenreiter.
236. Cello Concerto no. 2. 1983. Bärenreiter.
237. *Streichtrio in zwölf Stationen* (String trio in twelve stations). 1985. Unpublished.
238. *Opus sine nomine*. Oratorio for soprano, mezzo-soprano, two tenors, baritone, narrator, mixed chorus, and orchestra. Text composed and selected by the composer (in German and Latin). 1988. Unpublished.
- 238a. *For Myself, at Eighty-five*. Four-voiced canon a cappella. (Based on material from op. 238). Text by the composer. 1985. *Perspectives of New Music* 24 (Fall/Winter 1985): 272.
239. *Dyophonie*. For two cellos. 1988. Unpublished.
240. Piano Sonata no. 7. 1988. Bärenreiter.
- [unnumbered.] *Symeon der Stylit* (Simeon the Stylite). Oratorio for soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, speaker, mixed chorus, and orchestra. 1936 (with an ending added in 1988). Bärenreiter.

APPENDIX C : SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Recordings are listed in the order of the opus numbers. They were chosen on the basis of probable obtainability and the importance of at least one of the compositions where several are recorded on the same disc. For information regarding early or otherwise hard to obtain recordings, consult Bowles, *Ernst Krenek: A Bio-Bibliography*.

6. String Quartet no. 1 (1921). Musikproduktion Dabringhaus und Grimm L3280: CD. Sonare Quartett. (With the String Quartet no. 2, op. 8.)
7. Symphony no. 1 (1921). Amadeo 415 825-1: LP, stereo. ORF-Symphonicorchester; Lothar Zagrosek, cond. (A triple album release with Symphony no. 2, op. 12; and Symphony no. 3, op. 16: Amadeo 415 826-1 and 415 827-1, respectively.)
8. String Quartet no. 2 (1921). *See* op. 6.
12. Symphony no. 2 (1922). *See* op. 7.
16. Symphony no. 3 (1922). *See* op. 7.
- 30a. *Lieder*. Orion ORS 79348: LP, stereo. Neva Pilgrim, soprano; Madison Quartet; William Nichols, clarinet. (With *Four Hopkins Songs*, op. 112; *Zeitlieder*, op. 215; and Gladys Nordenstrom, *Zeit XXIV*.)
35. *Die Jahreszeiten* (The seasons, 1925). Orion ORS 80377: LP, stereo. College of the Desert Vocal Ensemble; John L. Norman, cond. (With *Gemischte Chöre* [Mixed choruses], op. 61; *Durch die Nacht* [Through the night], op. 67; *Three Sacred Pieces and Three Lessons*, op. 210; *I Ask'd a Thief; I Heard an Angel*, op. 226; and *O Holy Ghost*, op. 186a.)
44. *Drei lustige Märsche* (Three merry marches, 1926). Louisville Orchestra LS 756: LP, stereo. Jorge Mester, cond. ("Music for Winds, Brass, and Percussion"). (With *Kleine Blasmusik* [Little music for winds], op. 70a.)
45. *Jonny spielt auf* (Jonny plays on, 1926). Amadeo AVRS 5038: LP, stereo. William Blankenship, Max; Evelyn Lear, Anita; Gerd Feldhoff, Jonny; Thomas Stewart, Daniello; Lucia Popp, Yvonne; Wiener Volksoper Orchester; Akademie Kammerchor; Heinrich Hollreiser, cond. Also on Philips SAL 3498; and Amadeo AVRS 13 257.

48. *O Lacrymosa* (1926). Orion ORS 75204: LP, stereo. Genevieve Weide, soprano; John Dare, piano. (With *Santa Fe Timetable*, op. 102; *Doppelt beflügeltes Band* [Tape and double], op. 207; and *Toccata* [for accordion], op. 183.)
56. *Gesänge* (Songs, 1927). Orion ORS 78298: LP, stereo. Michael Ingham, baritone; Carolyn Horn, piano. (With *Spätlese* [Late harvest], op. 218.)
61. *Gemischte Chöre* (Mixed choruses, 1929). See op. 35.
62. *Reisebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen* (Travel book from the Austrian Alps, 1929). Edition Rhodos ERS 1201-3: LP, stereo. Rudo Timper, tenor; the composer, piano. (With *Gesänge des späten Jahres* [Songs of the late years], op. 71; and *The Ballad of the Railroads*, op. 98.) Also on Preiserrecords SPR 135 007: LP, stereo. Julius Patzak, tenor; Heinrich Schmidt, piano. And on Preiserrecords 120 728: LP, stereo ("Krenek Matinee") Heinrich Zednik, tenor; Konrad Leitner, piano.
65. String Quartet no. 5 (1930). Composers Recordings CRI SD 522: LP, stereo. Thouvenel String Quartet.
67. *Durch die Nacht* (Through the night, 1931). Anne Marie Ketchum, soprano; George Calusdian, piano. See op. 35.
- 70a. *Kleine Blasmusik* (Little music for winds, 1931). See op. 44.
71. *Gesänge des späten Jahres* (Songs of the late years, 1931). Orion ORS 78308: LP, stereo. Michael Ingham, baritone; Carolyn Horn, piano. Also see op. 62.
73. *Karl V* (1933/1954). Amadeo AVRS 305: LP, stereo. Theo Adam, Karl V; Hanna Schwarz, Juana; Sena Jurinac, Eleonore; Frank Hoffmann, Juan de Ragla; Helmut Melchert, Francisco Borgia; Peter Schreier, Francis I; ORF Chorus; ORF Symphonieorchester; Gerd Albrecht, cond. Also on Philips 6769084: LP, stereo.
- 73a. *Fragmente aus dem Bühnenwerk Karl V* (Fragments from the stage work Karl V, 1933). Preiserrecords SPR 10049: LP, stereo. Halina Lukomska-Bloch, soprano; ORF Symphonieorchester; Ernst Bour, cond. (With Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 99; and *Seven Easy Pieces*, op. 146.)
- 92, no. 1. Sonata for Organ (1941). Musica Viva MV 50-1090: LP, stereo ("Arnold Schönberg, Ernst Krenek: Sämtliche Orgelwerke" [Arnold Schönberg, Ernst Krenek: Complete Organ Works]). Martin Haselböck. (With *Orga-nastro*, op. 212; *4 Winds Suite*, op. 223; and *Opus 231*.) Also on Colosseum MV 50-1090.
- 92, no. 4. Piano Sonata no. 3 (1943). Columbia ML 5336: LP, stereo. Glenn Gould. Also on CBS M3K 42150: CD ("The Glenn Gould Legacy, vol. 4").
93. *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* (1942). Bärenreiter Musicaphon 30 L 1303-4. NCRV Vocal Ensemble Hilversum; Marinus Voorberg, cond. Also on Bärenreiter LP 059 449.
98. *The Ballad of the Railroads*. See op. 62.
99. Sonata for Violin and Piano (1945). Ernst Kovacic, violin; Adolf Henning, piano. See op. 73a.
105. *Symphonic Elegy* (1946). Columbia ML 4524: LP, mono. New York Philharmonic Symphony; Dimitri Mitropoulos, cond. (With Arnold Schönberg, *Erwartung*.) Also on Philips A 01 495 L and ABL 3393. And on

- Music Library MLR 7029: LP, mono. San Francisco Chamber Ensemble. (With Piano Sonata no. 5, op. 121; and Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 117.)
112. *Four Hopkins Songs* (1947). Neva Pilgrim, soprano; Dennis Helmrich, piano. *See* op. 30a.
 114. Piano Sonata no. 4 (1948). Musical Heritage Society MHS 3874: LP, stereo ("Masterpieces of Twentieth-Century Piano Music, Vol. 3"). David Burge, piano. (With Pierre Boulez, Piano Sonata no. 2.)
 115. Violin Sonata no. 2 (1948). Orion ORS 73107: LP, stereo ("New Works for Violin"). Robert Gross, violin. (With works by Andrew Imbrie, Leonard Rosenman, Bruno Bartolozzi, and Heinrich J. F. Biber.)
 117. Sonata for Viola and Piano (1948). Ferenc Molnar, viola; Jane Hohfeld, piano. *See* op. 105. Also on Deutsche Grammophon LP 19 126: LP, mono. Michael Mann, viola; Yaltah Menuhin, piano. (With works by Maurice Ravel, Darius Milhaud, Manuel de Falla, Karol Szymanowski, and Arthur Honegger.)
 118. String Trio (1949). Calig CAL 50 861: CD ("Streichtrios der Neuen Wiener Schule" [String trios of the new Viennese school]). Wiener Streichtrio. (With trios by Arnold Schönberg and Anton Webern.)
 121. Piano Sonata no. 5 (1950). Charlotte Zelka. *See* op. 105.
 132. *Two Sacred Songs* (1952). Bärenreiter Musicaphon 30 L 1534: LP, mono. Carla Henius, soprano; Aribert Reimann, piano.
 142. *Eleven Transparencies* (1954). Louisville Orchestra LOU 56-3: LP, mono. Louisville Orchestra; Robert Whitney, cond. (With Robert Caamaño, *Magnificat*.)
 145. *Capriccio* (1955). Orion ORS 79362: LP, stereo. Evelyn Elsing, cello; American Camerata for New Music; John Stephens, cond. (With *The Dissembler*, op. 229; and Lawrence Moss, *Symphonies, Brasses, Chamber Orchestra*.)
 146. *Seven Easy Pieces* (1955). ORF Symphoniorchester; George Singer, cond. *See* op. 73a.
 152. *Spiritus intelligentiae, Sanctus* (1956). Deutsche Grammophon LP 16 134: LP, mono. Käthe Möller-Siepermann, soprano; Martin Häusler, tenor; the composer, speaker; electronic realization, Heinz Schutz. Also on LPE 17 244. (With G. M. König, *Klangfiguren*.)
 153. *The Bell Tower* (1956). University of Illinois CRS 5: LP, mono. Donna Sue Burton, Una; Manfred Capell, Bannadonna; William Olson, Giovanni; chorus, and orchestra; John Garvey, cond.
 161. *Sestina* (1957). Orion ORS 78295: LP, stereo. Bethany Beardsley, soprano; the composer, cond. (With *Pieces* [for trombone], op. 198; and *Flötenstück neunphasig* [Flute piece in nine phases], op. 171.)
 166. *Echoes from Austria* (1958). Orion ORS 76246: LP, stereo. The composer, piano. (With *Aulokithara*, op. 213a; *Wechselrahmen*, op. 189; and *Three Sacred Pieces*, op. 210.)
 168. *Sechs Vermessene* (Six Measurements, 1958). Candide CE31015: LP, stereo ("Avant Garde Piano"). David Burge, piano. (With works by Lucian Berio, Pierre Boulez, Luigi Dallapiccola, and Karlheinz Stockhausen.) Also on Vox STGBY 637.

171. *Flötenstück neunphasig* (Flute piece in nine phases, 1959). See op. 161.
177. *From Three Make Seven* (1961/1968). Orion ORS 78290: LP, stereo ("Krenek Conducts Krenek"). Sinfonieorchester der Südwestfunk; the composer, cond. (With *Horizon Circled*, op. 196; and *Von vorn herein* [From the outset], op. 219.)
183. *Toccata* [for accordion] (1962). See op. 48.
186. *Der goldene Bock* (The golden ram, 1963): "Nicht länger kann ich bleiben," from act 3. EMI Electrola 1C 195-29 107/109: LP, mono ("Musiktheater heute: Eine Dokumentation der Hamburgischen Staatsoper" [Music theater today: A Documentation of the Hamburg State Opera]). (With excerpts from *Sardakai*, op. 206; and from operas by Alban Berg, Giselher Klebe, Gian Carlo Menotti, Lars Johan Werle, Milko Kelemen, and Mauricio Kagel.)
- 186a. *O Holy Ghost* (1964). See op. 35.
189. *Wechselrahmen* (Changing frames, 1965). Beverly Ogdon, soprano; the composer, piano. See op. 166.
191. *Quintina über die fünf Vokale* (Quintina on the five vowels, 1965). Orion ORS 80380: LP, stereo. Constance Navratil, soprano; University of California, Santa Barbara, Chamber Players, conducted by the composer. (With *They Knew What They Wanted*, op. 227.)
193. *Stücke* (Pieces, 1966). Orion ORS 78288: LP, stereo ("Four Pieces for Oboe and Piano"). James Ostryniec, oboe; the composer, piano. (With works by Charles Wuorinen and Lawrence Moss.)
196. *Horizon Circled* (1967). See op. 177.
198. *Pieces* (1967). Stuart Dempster, trombone; the composer, piano. See op. 161.
205. *Fivefold Enfoldment* (1969). ORF 120 423: LP, stereo ("Steirischer Herbst, Musikprotokoll 1980"). ORF Symphonieorchester; Leit Segerstam, cond. (With *Auf- und Ablehnung*, op. 220; and *They Knew What They Wanted*, op. 227.)
206. *Sardakai, oder Das kommt davon* (Sardakai, or That gets away, 1969): "Ich bin Sardakai," from act 1; and "Mr. Wilson, I Presume," from act 2. See op. 186.
207. *Doppelt beflügeltes Band* (Tape and double, 1970). Patricia Marcus, William Tracy, pianos. See op. 48.
210. *Three Sacred Pieces and Three Lessons* (1971). See op. 35. For the *Three Sacred Pieces*, see also op. 166.
212. *Orga-nastro* (1971). See op. 92, no. 1.
213. *Kitharaulos* (1971). Varese Sarabande VR 81200: LP, stereo. James Ostryniec, oboe; Karen Lindquist, harp; Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; the composer, cond. (With *Statisch und ekstatisch* [Static and ecstatic], op. 214.) Also on Amadeo AVRS 6506.
- 213a. *Aulokithara* (1972). James Ostryniec, oboe; Karen Lindquist, harp; tape. See op. 166.
214. *Statisch und ekstatisch* (Static and ecstatic, 1972). See op. 213.
215. *Zeitlieder* (Time songs, 1972). Neva Pilgrim, soprano; Madison Quartet. See op. 30a.
218. *Spätlese* (Late harvest, 1973). See op. 56.
219. *Von vorn herein* (From the outset, 1974). See op. 177.
220. *Auf- und Ablehnung* (Rebellion and rejection, 1974). See op. 205.
223. *Four Winds Suite* [for organ] (1975). See op. 92.

224. *Dream Sequence* (1976). Crest CBDNA 77-6: LP, quadrophonic. Baylor Wind Ensemble; Dick Floyd, cond. (With works by Gustav Holst, Monte Tubbs, and David Wallis Reeves.)
226. *I Ask'd a Thief; I Heard an Angel* (1976). *See op. 35.*
227. *They Knew What They Wanted* (1977). Rheda Becker, narrator; James Ostryniec, oboe; Paul Hoffmann, piano; Mark Goldstein, percussion. *See op. 191.* Also recorded in German with Marianne Kopatz, narrator; James Ostryniec, oboe; Adolf Hennig, piano; the composer, cond. *See op. 205.*
229. *The Dissembler* (1978). Michael Ingham, baritone; American Camerata for New Music; John Stephens, cond. *See op. 145.*
231. *Opus 231* (1979). Ernst Kovacic, violin; Martin Haselböck, organ. *See op. 92, no. 1.*

APPENDIX D: BOOKS BY KRENEK

Über neue Musik (On new music) (Vienna: Ringbuchhandlung, 1937; reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977). Six lectures on contemporary music and music aesthetics delivered in Vienna during the autumn of 1936.

Music Here and Now, translated by Barthold Fles (New York: W.W. Norton, 1939). The significant portions of *Über neue Musik* with substantial additions pertaining to popular music and music education.

Studies in Counterpoint Based on the Twelve-Tone Technique (New York: G. Schirmer, 1940). A brief textbook for college-level students.

Selbstdarstellung (Self-Description) (Zürich: Atlantis Musikbücherei, 1948). A short but illuminating autobiography that emphasizes the composer's intellectual and musical development. Translated by the author and reprinted as "Self-Analysis," *New Mexico Quarterly* 23 (Spring 1953): 5–57.

Musik im goldenen Westen (Music in the golden west) (Vienna: Brüder Hollinek, 1949). A description for European readers of American music since 1900 and its makers.

Johannes Ockeghem (London: Sheed & Ward, 1953). A spirited account of the nature and excellence of the music of a fifteenth-century master with whom Krenek felt a strong affinity.

Total Counterpoint in the Style of the Eighteenth Century (Lynbrook, N.Y.: Boosey & Hawkes, 1958). A textbook for the composing of two- and three-part inventions.

Modal Counterpoint in the Style of the Sixteenth Century (Lynbrook, N.Y.: Boosey & Hawkes, 1959). A brief textbook on the rules governing composition in the time of Palestrina.

De rebus prius factis (About things before deeds) (Frankfurt: Wilhelm Hansen, 1956). An account of serialism and electronic music as these were at the time, and the similarity between contemporary and medieval compositional techniques.

Zur Sprache gebracht (Put into words), edited by Friedrich Saathen (Munich: Albert Langen–Georg Müller, 1958). An important collection of essays written for the general reader that range over three decades and deal principally, but not exclusively, with music.

Gedanken unterwegs (Thoughts along the way), edited by Friedrich Saathen (Munich: Albert Langen–Georg Müller, 1959). Acute and witty essays based on Krenek's travels in Europe and his journey in 1937 across the United States.

Prosa Dramen Verse (Prose, dramas, poetry) [edited by Friedrich Saathen] (Munich: Albert Langen-Georg Müller, 1965). Contains "Die drei Mäntel des Anton K." (The three overcoats of Anton K.); the libretti of *Jonny spielt auf*, *Leben des Orest*, *Kehraus um St. Stephan*, *Karl V*, *Vertrauenssache* (What price confidence?), *Pallas Athene weint*, *Der Glockenturm* (The bell tower), *Ausgerechnet und verspielt*, and *Der goldene Bock*; and the texts of *Reisebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen*, *Gesänge des späten Jahres*, *Die Ballade von den Eisenbahnen* (The ballad of the railroads), *Sestina*, and *Kanon Igor Stravinsky zum achtzigsten Geburtstag*. Items originally in English are printed in German.

Exploring Music, translated by Margaret Shenfield and Geoffrey Skelton (New York: October House, 1966; and London: Calder & Boyars, 1966). A collection of essays, most of which were translated from *Zur Sprache gebracht*.

Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974). Four essays based on lectures delivered at the University of California, San Diego, in 1970, in which Krenck surveys his musical life and his involvement with the twelve-tone technique and total serialism. Contains analytical comments on *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae*, *Sestina*, *Horizon Circled*, and other works. A yet more detailed analysis of *Horizon Circled* by Wilbur Ogdon is included.

With Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, *Briefwechsel* (Correspondence), edited by Wolfgang Rogge (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974). A fascinating exchange of views on contemporary music and the effect of social forces on it. Included are a number of important essays by the correspondents.

Das musikdramatische Werk (The music-drama works), 3 volumes, edited by Franz Eugen Dostal (Vienna: Österreichische Verlagsanstalt, 1974–1990). A collection of Krenck's libretti. Those originally in English are printed in German.

Im Zweifelsfalle. Aufsätze über Musik (In case of doubt: Essays on music) (Vienna: Europa-verlag, 1984). A selection of important essays from previous volumes with some added pieces. Grouped into four sections, they deal with the possibility of opera today, composers, the rules of music, and "general considerations," i.e., the situation of contemporary music.

With Friedrich T. Gubler, *Der hoffnungslose Radikalismus der Mitte: Der Briefwechsel Ernst Krenck–Friedrich T. Gubler, 1928–1939* (The hopeless radicalism of the center: The correspondence of Ernst Krenck–Friedrich T. Gubler, 1928–1939), edited by Claudia Maurer Zenck (Vienna: Böhlau, 1989). A remarkable collection of letters covering the years of Krenck's political activism. Included are the more important essays to which Krenck and Gubler allude. The editor's notes are unusually informative and helpful.

1. THE EARLY YEARS IN VIENNA: 1900–1919

1. The name is of Czech origin and is properly presented as “Křenek,” pronounced “Křshenek” with the accent on the first syllable. After moving to the United States the composer dropped the diacritical mark. English speakers thus pronounce “Krenek” as written. Austrians retain the mark and the original pronunciation.

2. Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973), 44. My indebtedness to this fine book is great. The observation about values would be true of a family such as Alban Berg's but not without qualifications of Krenek's, for his parents had begun life elsewhere. Readers interested in the myths and realities of the Old South should consult W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941).

3. Ernst Krenek, “On the Aging and Obsolescence of Music,” in *Exploring Music*, trans. Margaret Shenfield and Geoffrey Skelton (London: Calder & Boyars, 1966), 222–225. Originally published as “Vom Altern und Veraltern der Musik,” *Forum* 3 (December 1956): 446–448.

4. This and other early attempts at composing are among the Krenek papers in the music section of the Wiener Stadtbibliothek (Vienna City Library).

5. Ernst Krenek, “Alban Berg's ‘Lulu,’” in *Exploring Music*, 113–122. First published in the *Wiener Zeitung* for June 6, 1937; reprinted in Krenek's *Zur Sprache gebracht* (Munich: Albert Langen–Georg Müller, 1958), 241–250. For more on Weininger and his influence on Karl Kraus, consult Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, 71–75.

6. In recognition of their mutual interests Krenek composed for Stravinsky's eightieth birthday a canon with a Latin text having precisely eighty syllables.

7. Ernst Krenek, “Self-Analysis,” *New Mexico Quarterly* 23 (Spring 1953): 8–9. This is Krenek's translation and enlargement of his pamphlet *Selbstdarstellung* (Zürich: Atlantis Musikbücherei, 1948).

8. Quoted in Alfred Diamant, *Austrian Catholics and the First Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 116–117.

9. There is in the Krenek papers of the Vienna City Library a card indicating that Krenek

was a student at the university during the academic year of 1920–1921 and received credit for his work. In fact, he was out of the city during the entire period. In those days, students in good standing often reenrolled and let friends take their places in class. Krenek cannot account for the card, but thinks that something of this sort might explain it.

2. THE YOUNG ATONALIST: 1920–1923

1. Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 75.

2. Ibid., 4–7, 112–113, 119. See also Walter H. Sokel, *The Writer in Extremis* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1959), for an excellent account of Expressionist literature.

3. Krenek's letters to his parents down to 1943 and theirs to him down to 1938 are in the Krenek Archive of the Vienna City Library. So, too, are his letters to his mother from 1946 until her death in 1972. The letters they wrote to him between 1938 and 1943 and his mother's letters to him of 1946 onward are in the Krenek Archive located in the Central Library of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD).

4. Barczynski's first name does not appear in the letters, and in later years Krenek could not recall it. It is not clear why he felt that he had to assure his parents of his new friend's respectability.

5. The libretto survives in the form of a revision made by Franz Werfel, which Krenek used when he came to compose the music. Demuth's original vanished long ago. However, the tone of the libretto is not simply an effect of Werfel's touching up the language, for it pervades the entire conception and particularly the characterizations as exhibited in the action as well as the dialogue.

6. The *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (roughly, "Journal of New Music"), which was usually called simply *Anbruch* (by itself "Vanguard" or, less idiomatically, "Beginning[s]"), was founded in 1918 and edited by various persons under the general direction of the musicologist Paul Stefan, who had studied composition under Schönberg and had written strongly partisan books about Wagner and Mahler. (He later wrote a similar one about Schönberg.) Much of the writing it contained and even the editing of *Anbruch* were done in Berlin, for it was there much more than in Vienna, where Universal Edition (UE) had its headquarters, that the music to which it was devoted was performed and, for that matter, often composed. It was intended to advance the fortunes of composers affiliated with UE, and it would rarely publish any truly hostile criticism of their works. But it was not confined to calling attention to these, and it published many important essays on contemporary music, including very favorable notices of works by composers affiliated with other firms. Publication was suspended when the Nazis took over the firm after the *Anschluss*. In 1945 Friedrich Wildgans tried to start a new *Anbruch* (*Neuer Anbruch*) but was unable to realize his plans.

Major German and Austrian music publishers have traditionally given strong support to scholarly-critical journals such as *Anbruch*, which serve a valuable function in the cultural life of these countries. Another such journal is *Musica*, published in Kassel since 1947 by the firm of Bärenreiter. There is no equivalent of these journals in the United States. Although *The Musical Quarterly* was for many years published by G. Schirmer, it is very different from its European counterparts, though no less fine and valuable. (It is now published by Oxford University Press.)

7. Ernst Krenek, letter to Bekker, August 16, 1924; now in the Bekker papers in the Library of Congress (LC).

8. This is not Krenek's first string quartet. In a letter to Paul Bekker, December 14, 1924, Krenek refers to a quartet in D major in three movements composed in 1919. (Actually it was composed on May 5, 1920.) It bears no number. Krenek wrote it partly as a school exercise and partly as an entry to a contest sponsored by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge before she established the foundation named for her. When it failed to take first place, Krenek decided not to list it among his works. It has never been performed, although the manuscript score is still extant and is now in the Vienna Public Library.

The terms "tonal" and "atonal" have become blurred in recent years because some theorists are now persuaded that all music is inescapably tonal, that there is no such thing as atonal music. When "atonal" was first used, "tonal" was understood to mean "in keeping with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century harmonic idioms," idioms that embodied conceptions of keys, triadic harmony, tonic and dominant notes, and so forth. Thus "atonal" referred to music composed without regard to these conceptions. Familiar triads might appear in this music, but they did not lead anywhere. Today many believe that other factors in addition to traditional harmonic conventions can establish a hierarchy among the notes of a musical work and thus convey a sense of tonality and even of a key. Important as this point surely is, it is convenient when discussing the music of Schönberg and Krenek to use "tonal" and "atonal" in the sense that they themselves—and until recently everyone else—used them. (Schönberg, however, disliked and sought to avoid using "atonal," preferring to speak of "floating tones" and "the emancipation of dissonance.") Those interested in later conceptions of atonality and tonality can find them discussed by Paul Lansky/George Perle and Carl Dahlhaus respectively in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*; ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 1:669–673 and 19:51–55.

9. The motif was used by Bach in his *Art of the Fugue* and later by many other composers, among them Schumann and Liszt.

10. Ernst Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*, with contributions by Will Ogdon and John L. Stewart (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 21; and interview with the author, Palm Springs, May 19, 1972.

11. Ernst Krenek, "Ernst Krenek," in *The Orchestral Composer's Point of View: Essays on Twentieth-Century Music by Those Who Wrote It*, ed. Robert Stephan Hines (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 106; and interview with the author, Palm Springs, April 7, 1972. Claudia Maurer Zenck has speculated in an unpublished paper entitled "Der geschichtliche Ort von Krenek's 2. Symphonie" (The Historical Place of Krenek's Second Symphony, 1978) that Krenek may have seen the manuscript of Mahler's unfinished Tenth Symphony while on a short visit to Vienna in March 1922, just before he began work on his own Second Symphony. By this time he was well acquainted with Mahler's widow. Zenck says, "The Adagio/Largo episode of the violins introduced into the final movement of the [Krenek] Second Symphony exhibits significant resemblances to the Adagio of Mahler's Tenth, not only in the Dukrus, but also in the gradual cleavage of the melody into high and low portions." Later, at Frau Mahler's request, Krenek prepared the first and third movements of the unfinished score of the Tenth for performance in Vienna on October 12, 1924. He did not, as has sometimes been said, attempt to complete the symphony on the basis of Mahler's sketches. That effort, which earned great opprobrium, was undertaken by others.

12. Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 21.

13. Ibid.

14. Krenek, "Ernst Krenek," 106–107.

15. Zenck, "Krenek's 2. Symphonie"; Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 45.

16. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, April 7, 1972.

17. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 11, 1972.
18. Quoted by Krenek from his memoirs, in "Ernst Krenek," 107. The memoirs were written between 1942 and 1947 and cover Krenek's life to that point. They are deposited in the Library of Congress and are sealed until fifteen years after Krenek's death.
19. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 12, 14.
20. Zenck, "Krenek's 2. Symphonic."
21. Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, "Ernst Krenek" (1935), an unpublished essay in the Vienna Public Library. I am indebted to Zenck for bringing it to my attention.
22. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, September 15, 1972.

3. COMEDY AND CONFUSION:

1924-1926

1. From an undated letter; on it Krenek's father noted that it arrived on February 28. The year, 1922, can be determined from references to the strike and from other, dated letters.

2. Alma Mahler-Werfel's statement in her autobiography, *And the Bridge is Love* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1958), that Krenek served as the model for Fischboeck, a character in Werfel's *Verdi*, is manifestly incorrect, for the novel was completed before Krenek and Werfel met. Fischboeck is described as composing mathematical and arid music that is the exact opposite of Verdi's. Insofar as this fictional personage resembles anyone, it is the Austrian theorist and composer Joseph Matthias Hauer, who, independently of Schönberg, developed a twelve-tone system based on arithmetic calculations that envisioned $12 \times 479,001,600$ permutations. In context, Frau Mahler-Werfel's remark seems deliberately spiteful.

3. Anna Mahler, interview with the author, Bel Air (Los Angeles), February 11, 1984.

4. Ernst Krenek, letter to Bekker, December 14, 1924; Bekker papers, LC.

5. *Le boeuf sur le toit* was the final number on a program of works by the "nouveaux jeunes" including Poulenc, Auric, and their mentor, Satie. On February 26, 1981, Krenek took part in a Los Angeles concert called "Composer's Choice," for which he was asked to select both works of his own and works by composers who had influenced him. For the latter he chose Webern's Quartet for Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, Violin, and Piano, op. 22, and a four-hand piano transcription of the score of *Le boeuf sur le toit*.

I am indebted for many of the details of Cocteau's life to Francis Steegmuller's excellent *Cocteau: A Biography* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970).

6. Ernst Krenek, letter to Bekker, December 14, 1924.

7. Ibid. Also Ernst Krenek, "A Composer's Influences," *Perspectives of New Music* 3, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 1964): 37. In the spring of 1921 Krenek had been urged by Alois Hába to visit Paris, but he dismissed the idea on the grounds that it would not do much for him (Ernst Krenek, letter to his parents, June 3, 1924).

8. Krenek, letter to Bekker, December 14, 1924.

9. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 14.

10. Krenek, letter to Bekker, December 14, 1924.

11. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 15.

12. Alma Moodie, who was a few months older than Krenek, was just becoming known as a recitalist and admired for her brilliant technical skill. She later became prominent in German musical circles. After marrying she retired from the concert stage but continued to teach. She died in Frankfurt at the age of forty-three. Some aspects of her personality were used for Anita in *Jonny spielt auf*.

13. Krenek was displeased with *Mammon* and concluded that he had no gift for the genre,

to which he returned only once. In 1939, after he had emigrated to the United States and was once again in financial difficulty, he accepted a commission from Lincoln Kirstein to compose a ballet for a semiprofessional company in Hartford, Connecticut. Entitled *Eight Column Line*, op. 85 (1939), this was not in his view a success either.

14. Krenek's letters are among the Bekker papers in the Library of Congress. None of them say just what he read about the theater, and when asked in 1980 he could not remember. However, it appears from the program notes that he wrote after joining Bekker that he read mostly plays, especially of the last half-century, and histories of European drama. The background music for the Calderón play has vanished.

15. The Rubensohns were imprisoned when Hitler came to power, but they managed to escape. After crossing the Soviet Union by railroad, they settled in Shanghai, where they remained until the end of the war, when they moved to New York. Once there they renewed their ties with Krenek, and Emy Rubensohn busied herself with trying to get his music played. She wrote tirelessly to Krenek, often three times a week and rarely less than once. After her husband's death she lived for a time with Alma Mahler-Werfel in the latter's Manhattan apartment. Frail and finally slowed by illness during her last year, she died of a heart attack in March 1961. In her last letter, dated March 13, 1961, she wrote, "Dear Ernst, As I write I am lying in the hospital with a heart attack—things go slowly—Alas, that I cannot have you nearby. A thousand loves. [May] all [be] good. I must not write any more. Your Emy." A most gallant lady.

16. Krenek later prepared an orchestral suite from the music for Goethe's *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit*, which was well received. It was scheduled for performance in Mannheim on March 6, 1933, but was withdrawn to avoid offending the Nazis, who had just taken control of the Reichstag.

17. The three essays recapitulate ideas from "'Materialbestimmtheit' der Oper" (Determining the material of opera), published in the January–February 1927 issue of *Anbruch*. They themselves appeared in the Kassel theater notes dated Spring 1927, April 1927, and Early Summer 1927. Other significant Kassel essays are "Der Darsteller in der Oper" (The actor in opera), November 7, 1925; "Musik im Schauspiel" (Music in the drama), November 1925; "Über der Operette" (Concerning the operetta), December 1925; "Das Dekorativ-Element im Theater," December 1925; "Beurteilung des Theaters" (Theater criticism), March 1926; "Die Revue," undated; "Über die Beziehungen von Oper und Schauspiel" (Concerning the relation of opera and drama), [no month] 1926–1927 and December–January 1926–1927; and "Über die Geschmack" (Concerning taste), May 1927. "'Materialbestimmtheit' in der Oper" was reprinted in the UE *Jahrbuch* (Yearbook) for 1927, and in Krenek, *Zur Sprache gebracht*. Although many of the essays in *Zur Sprache gebracht* were published in *Exploring Music*, this important piece was not included.

4. KRENEK'S EARLY OPERAS

1. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, December 18, 1980.

2. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 19, 1981. In a lecture delivered in 1970, Krenek remarked: "Franz Werfel revised and rewrote this rather pessimistic libretto . . . and gave it a more hopeful slant, indicating at the end that salvation was beckoning somewhere in the ever-so-distant future." Krenek then added, "The idea of freedom in its many aspects has intrigued me ever since and has become a dominant concept in many of my dramatic works" (*Horizons Circled*, 37).

3. H. F. Redlich, an authority on the Second Viennese School, attributed the libretto to

Werfel in his article on Krenek in the fifth edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and made no mention of Demuth. Lothar Knessel did the same in his booklet *Ernst Krenek* (Vienna: Elisabeth Lafite, 1967), as did Oliver Daniel in his entry on Krenek in the *New Grove*. Nevertheless, in all but the phrasing and the optimism of the ending, the libretto was Demuth's.

4. Wolfgang Rogge, *Ernst Kreneks Opern. Spiegel der zwanziger Jahre* (Wolfenbüttel and Zürich: Möselag, 1970), 11.

5. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 19, 1981.

6. From a review by Stuckenschmidt entitled "Die Lebende." A newspaper clipping of the review is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD; unfortunately, neither the source nor the date is indicated.

7. Berg's letter, dated October 27, 1924, is in the Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.

8. Max Schillings, intendant of the Berlin State Opera, letter to Krenek, November 15, 1924; in the Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.

9. This reckoning includes *Bluff* and *Kehraus um St. Stephan* (Cleaning up around St. Stephen's [Cathedral]), op. 66 (1930). The latter, which is discussed in Chapter 5, remained in manuscript and was not performed until 1990.

10. From a letter to his parents dated November 9, 1922, in which he does not name the comedy. Toller's only comedy, *Der entfesselte Wotan* (Wotan unchained), was not published until 1923. From the context of the letter it seems unlikely that Krenek mistook the name of the dramatist to whom he wrote, but it is not clear where he read or saw the work, which he speaks of as published. In later years he could remember nothing of the matter.

11. Rogge, *Kreneks Opern*, 19. If the comedy by Toller that Krenek wanted to use was in fact *Der entfesselte Wotan* (see note 10), then the character of Dr. Berg may have been modeled on Toller's Wilhelm Dietrich Wotan, a megalomaniacal barber who attracts a great following with a fraudulent scheme for emigration to Brazil. Toller had Hitler in mind when he created this character.

12. See, for example, Kokoschka's remarks in *My Life*, trans. David Britt (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 78, 96. The play was not finished until 1918.

13. Ernst Krenek, letter to his parents, January 15, 1923.

14. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 13.

15. Alban Berg, letter to Krenek, February 9, 1923. Berg's letter was written for him by his wife. A short postscript in his own, nearly unreadable script is appended. This letter, together with a number of postcards attesting to the cordiality between the composers, is in the Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library. Krenek's letters to Berg apparently have disappeared.

16. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 19, 1981.

17. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 23, 1973. The other works Krenek named were the Second Symphony, the Sixth String Quartet, *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae*, *Karl V*, *Sestina*, and *Spiritus intelligentiae, Sanctus*. In addition to its musical merits, each of the works represents a turning point or major advance in Krenek's progress as a composer.

18. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 16. The character of Anita was also taken from life (see Chapter 3, note 12, above).

19. From a translation by Ernst and Gladys Krenek for a concert performance entitled *Jonny Plays On* at the New England Conservatory of Music on May 12, 1976.

20. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 19, 1982.

21. Rogge, *Kreneks Opern*, 68–69.

22. Gustav Brecher, letter to Krenek, December 28, 1928; Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.

23. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, June 2, 1976.

24. Alan Rich, "Why Jonny Can't Swing," *New York*, May 31, 1976, 72.

25. Gustav Brecher, letter to Krenek, June 18, 1928; Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.

5. NEOROMANTICISM AND THE INFLUENCE OF SCHUBERT: 1927–1930

1. Apparently MGM had no intention of making a movie of *Jonny* but thought that with sound films coming in it would be wise to have the rights to such a potentially popular item, if only to keep it out of the hands of others.

2. From an interview published in the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 25, 1928.

3. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, January 18, 1972.

4. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, October 15, 1971.

5. From entries dated July 6 and September 10, 1941, in a diary that grew into a journal and was kept by Krenek between 1937 and 1942. It is now in the Krenek Archive, UCSD. (See Chapter 8, note 27.)

6. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, January 12, 1972.

7. Ernst Krenek, "Schubert," a revision of his talk first published in *Anbruch* 11 (January 1929): 11–41; reprinted in *Zur Sprache gebracht*, 35–41.

8. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, January 12, 1972.

9. Ernst Krenek, an untitled, unpublished commentary on *Karl V* now in the Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.

10. Ernst Krenek, "Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Trilogie 'O Lacrymosa,'" *Das Insel-schiff* 9 (Summer 1928): 228–233; reprinted in *Zur Sprache gebracht*, 31–34.

11. Ernst Krenek, "Leben des Orest," *Anbruch* 12 (January 1930): 1–4.

12. *Ibid.*, 4.

13. Ernst Krenek, "Der 'entlarvte' Orest," an open letter replying to a review of *Leben des Orest* by Bernard Diebold, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 22, 1930, 1–2.

14. Krenek, "Leben des Orest," 4.

15. Andrew Porter, "Orestes in Oregon," *The New Yorker*, December 8, 1975, 176: a review of the Portland (Ore.) production of *The Life of Orestes*, on November 22, 23, and 24, 1975.

16. Martin Bernheimer, "Two Operatic Revelations in Multnomah County," *Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 1975, "Calendar" sec., 76: another review of the Portland production.

17. Gustav Brecher, letters to Krenek, December 17, 1928, and May 18, 1929; Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.

18. Paul Bekker, letter to Krenek, September 15, 1929; Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.

19. Porter, "Orestes in Oregon."

20. Ernst Krenek, "Musikalische Mobilmachung?" *Frankfurter Zeitung*, January 5, 1932.

21. Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, letter to Krenek, October 7, 1934, in Theodor W. Adorno and Ernst Krenek, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Wolfgang Rogge (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), 45.

22. Adorno elaborated this view of Stravinsky's music in his *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, first published in 1949. An English translation entitled *Philosophy of Modern Music*, edited by

Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster, was published in 1973 by the Seabury Press of New York. Adorno's book, which also contains a remarkable essay on Schönberg's music that formed the basis of some of the theoretical passages in Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, has been a major influence on contemporary music and musicology.

23. Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, "Zur Deutung Kreneks," a talk broadcast by the Frankfurt radio station, 1931, and printed in *Anbruch* 14 (February–March 1932): 42–45, reprinted in *Briefwechsel*, 194–198.

24. Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, letter to Krenek, September 30, 1932, in *Briefwechsel*, 41.

25. Ernst Krenek, "Freiheit und Technik," *Anbruch* 11 (July–August 1929): 286–289; reprinted in *Briefwechsel*, 161–166.

26. The essay was published in *Anbruch* 11 (May 1929).

27. Krenek's letter has disappeared. Adorno quoted his question in his response on April 9, 1929; *Briefwechsel*, 11–18.

28. Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, "Reaktion und Fortschritt," reprinted in *ibid.*, 174–180.

29. Ernst Krenek, "Fortschritt und Reaktion," reprinted in *ibid.*, 181–186.

30. Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, letter to Krenek, October 8, 1930, in *ibid.*, 20–21.

31. Adorno, "Zur Deutung Kreneks," reprinted in *ibid.*, 197.

32. Ernst Krenek, letter to Adorno, September 11, 1932; Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, letter to Krenek, September 30, 1932; in *Briefwechsel*, 31, 35–36, respectively.

33. Ernst Krenek, "Förderung auch an diese Zeit: Freiheit des menschlichen Geistes," *Anbruch* 14 (January 1932): 1–4; reprinted in *Zur Sprache gebracht*, 121–126; translated into English as "The Freedom of the Human Spirit" in *Exploring Music*, 61–67. Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, "Zur Physiognomik Kreneks," in *Musik und Szene* 2 (1957–1958): 146–151; reprinted in *Briefwechsel*, 227–231.

34. The plays of Johann Nepomuk Nestroy are little known outside Vienna because he used local dialects over which he laid a thick impasto of wordplay not translatable into ordinary German, let alone other languages. English-speaking audiences can form some idea of his plays from Tom Stoppard's *On the Razzle* (1981), which is adapted from and faithful to the spirit of Nestroy's *Einem Jux will er sich machen* (He's looking for a good time).

35. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, April 29, 1982.

36. In an interview with the author, Palm Springs, April 29, 1982, Krenek concurred entirely with this observation.

37. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, April 29, 1982.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Ernst Krenek, letter to Gubler, July 7, 1931; in *Der hoffnungslose Radikalismus der Mitte. Der Briefwechsel Ernst Krenek–Friedrich T. Gubler, 1928–1939*, ed. Claudia Maurer Zenck (Vienna: Böhlau, 1989), 109.

6. DOUBTS, DISMAY, AND THE SEARCH FOR NEW DIRECTIONS: 1930–1932

1. Gay, *Weimar Culture*, 76–77.

2. Friedrich Gubler, letters to Krenek, May 23, 1929, and December 30, 1929; in *Hoffnungsloser Radikalismus*, 15n.2, 24.

3. Friedrich Gubler, letter to Krenek, November 4, 1930; in *ibid.*, 52.
4. The discussion is reprinted in *Briefwechsel*, 187–193.
5. Ernst Krenek, letter to Gubler, January 6, 1931; in *Hoffnungsloser Radikalismus*, 70, 72.
6. Ernst Krenek, letter to Gubler, January 10, 1931; in *ibid.*, 74, 75–76.
7. “Aus Gründen der Kontrolle” is reprinted in Ernst Krenek, *Gedanken unterwegs*, ed. Friedrich Saathen (Munich: Albert Langen-Georg Müller, 1959), 24–31.
8. Ernst Krenek, letter to Gubler, July 7, 1931; Friedrich Gubler, letter to Krenek, July 9, 1931, *Hoffnungsloser Radikalismus*, 109–110, 111–112, respectively.
9. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, April 29, 1982.
10. Ernst Krenek, letter to Gubler, July 15, 1931; in *Hoffnungsloser Radikalismus*, 113–115.
11. Friedrich Gubler, letter to Krenek, July 24, 1931; in *ibid.*, 119–120.
12. Ernst Krenek, letter to Gubler, July 25, 1931; in *ibid.*, 125–126.
13. Ernst Krenek, letters to Gubler, September 10 and 12, 1931; in *ibid.*, 136–137, 139–140, respectively.
14. Ernst Krenek, letters to Gubler, September 17, 19, and 22 and October 3, 1931; in *ibid.*, 147–154.
15. Krenek volunteered this estimate of Kraus’s influence in an interview with the author, Palm Springs, October 2, 1971.
16. Hans Heinsheimer, “Eine süsse Spätlese,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 23, 1980; Ernst Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, June 3, 1979.
17. Wilma Abeles Iggers, *Karl Kraus: a Viennese Critic of the Twentieth Century* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 193.
18. *Ibid.*, 229.
19. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, October 2, 1971; Frank Field, *The Last Days of Mankind: Karl Kraus and His Vienna* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1967), 13.
20. Iggers, *Karl Kraus*, 5.
21. Heinsheimer, “Süsse Spätlese”; Ernst Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, June 3, 1979; Krenek, notes in the margin of a chronology of his life prepared by Friedrich Saathen; the unpublished chronology is among the papers of Saathen, who provided the author with a photocopy.
22. Krenek, “A Composer’s Influences,” 39.
23. Krenek, “Self-Analysis,” 6.
24. Several times during conversations with the author Krenek emphasized that he was only seeking a distraction when he began his close study of the twelve-tone technique. Stein’s essay was reprinted in *Von neuer Musik*, ed. H. Grues, E. Kruttge, and E. Thalheimer (Cologne: F.J. Marcan, 1925), and it was this book that Krenek consulted.
25. Ernst Krenek, *Music Here and Now*, trans. Barthold Fles (New York: W. W. Norton, 1939), 171–172.
26. Claudia Maurer Zenck, “Die Auseinandersetzung Adornos mit Krenek,” in *Adorno und die Musik*, ed. Otto Kolleritsch (Graz: Universal Edition, 1979), 227.
27. Krenek, unpublished diary, entry for May 30, 1940. See Chapter 5, note 5, above.
28. Krenek, unpublished notes on the poems prepared for the author; program notes for Krenek Festival, Santa Barbara, April 1979.
29. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, August 10, 1981.
30. Ernst Krenek, letter to Gubler, November 28, 1931; in *Hoffnungsloser Radikalismus*, 171–172.

31. This spat between Krenek and Gubler is documented in letters from Krenek to Gubler, April 15, 1932; May 1, 1932; June 24, 1932; and in letters from Gubler to Krenek, April 25, 1932; May 25, 1932; in *ibid.*, 208–210, 215, 222, 228, 230 (Krenek to Gubler); 214, 222–223 (Gubler to Krenek).

7. KARL V AND CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

1. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, October 2, 1971.

2. In August 1933 Krenek wrote “Studien zu meinem Bühnenwerk ‘Karl V’” (Studies for my stage work *Karl V*), in which he listed the most important articles and books he had read while preparing his libretto. This article was finally published a half-century later in *Krenek. Musik-Konzepte* 39/40, ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (Munich: Hans Pribil, 1984), 20–34. It contained the following information, as detailed by Krenek, regarding his sources:

1. For the historical-political setting:

Henri Massis, *Verteidigung des Abendlandes*, trans. G. Moenius (Hellerau, 1930)

Theodor Haecker, *Vergil. Vater des Abendlands* (Leipzig, 1931)

Theodor Haecker, “3 Betrachtungen über Vergil, Vater des Abendlands,” *Brenner* 13 (1932)

2. For the historical [details]:

Baumgarten, *Geschichte Karls V*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1855–1892)

Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Commentaires de Charles-Quint* (Brussels, 1862)

Korrespondenzen des Kaisers Karl V. (1513–1556), ed. K. Lanz, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1844–1846)

Aktenstücke und Briefe zur Geschichte Kaiser Karls V., ed. K. Lanz, Monumenta Habsburgica II (Vienna, 1857)

Relationen venetianischer Botschafter über Deutschland und Österreich im 16. Jahrhundert, ed. J. Fiedler, *Fontes rerum Austriacarum* 30 (Vienna, 1870)

M. Mignet, *Charles-Quint, son abdication, son séjour, et sa mort au monastère de Yuste* (Paris, 1854)

H. Schulz, *Der Sacco di Roma. Karls V. Truppen in Rom* (Halle, 1894)

G. Turba, “Über den Zug Karls V. gegen Algier,” *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* (Vienna, 1890)

P. Herre, *Barbara Blomberg. Die Geliebte Karls V. und Mutter Don Juans d'Austria* (Leipzig, 1909)

R. Treumann, *Die Monarchomachen. Eine Darstellung der revolutionären Staatslehren des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, Staats- und völkerrechtliche Abhandlungen I.1 (Leipzig, 1895)

R. Fülöp-Müller, *Macht und Geheimnis der Jesuiten* (Berlin, 1929) *Schlössers Weltgeschichte*, 28th ed., vols. 9 and 10

Duc de Lévis Mirepoix, *François I^{er}* (Paris, 1931)

A. Champollion-Figeac, *Captivité du roi François I^{er}* (Paris, 1847)

Lavis, *Histoire de France*, vols. 5 and 6 (Paris, n.d.)

3. For details of cultural history:

Pompe funèbre de Charles Quint (Anvers, 1559)

Dürers schriftlicher Nachlass (Halle, 1893)

Francolin, *Res Praecipue gestae Viennae* (Vienna, 1561)

Wahrhafte Beschreibung etc. (Graz, 1572)

Leben des Benvenuto Cellini, von ihm selbst geschrieben, trans. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Frankfurt am Main, 1924)

3. Quoted in Diamant, *Austrian Catholics*, 51.
4. Krenek, letter to Gubler, August 5, 1932; in *Hoffnungsloser Radikalismus*, 235.
5. Claudia Maurer Zenck believes that his interest in the mission went back as far as 1929; see her *Ernst Krenek. ein Komponist im Exil* (Vienna: Lafite, 1980), 54.
6. Ernst Krenek, "Konservative und radikal," *Wiener Zeitung* 231:56 (February 25, 1934): Sonntagsbeilage 2. The effect of the injunction "to stand on the right and to think on the left" of Ernst Karl Winter, with whom Krenek was closely associated by the time he wrote this essay, is plainly to be seen.
7. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 2, 1973.
8. Ernst Krenek, "Neue Wege der Musik im Drama," *Wiener Zeitung* 232:269 (September 29, 1935): Sonntagsbeilage 1; interview with the author, Palm Springs, April 7, 1972.
9. This untitled talk has not been published; a typescript from which one or more pages appear to be missing is in the Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.
10. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 24.
11. Krenek was especially insistent on this point during an interview with the author, Palm Springs, January 14, 1982.
12. Krenek, "A Composer's Influences," 39; interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 23, 1973.
13. Ernst Krenek, "Karl Kraus and Arnold Schoenberg," in *Exploring Music*, 84–85. The article appeared in 23, nos. 15/16 (October 25, 1934): 1–4.
14. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, January 14, 1982.
15. Ernst Krenek, letter to Alfred Rosenzweig, July 13, 1947; Krenek's carbon copy is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD. Rosenzweig was a Viennese critic and musicologist who left Austria at the time of the *Anschluss* and settled in England. He had written to Krenek asking for details about the origin of *Karl V*; see note 24 below.
16. Except as noted, all quotations from the libretto are from an unpublished translation made by Krenek and Virginia Seay in 1944.
17. Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 44. The better to have these happenings serve as illustrations, Krenek made some modifications in the actual events. For example, he made the German Protestant general, Moritz, appear at the Diet of Worms as an ally of Luther when in fact he was born in the year of that assembly. Frundsberg is said to be the leader of the German soldiers who captured Rome, but the troops, who came from several nations, were led by Charles, duc de Bourbon. Frundsberg is given an interview with Clement VII before the attack on Rome, but no such interview took place. He is shown committing suicide in horror at the behavior of the conquering army, but in fact he died the following year in Swabia. Finally, Karl's sister, Eleonore, is shown in attendance at his deathbed; actually she died several months earlier.
18. The idea of Asia's gaining from the disintegration of the Catholic empire and civilization came straight from Henri Massis's *Défense*. In referring to "Asia" Krenek had in mind the Soviet Union.
19. Translation by the author.
20. Rogge, *Kreneks Opern*, 119.
21. Gary Schmidgall, *Literature as Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 23.
22. Theodor W. Adorno, letter to Krenek, October 28, 1934; in *Briefwechsel*, 48–56, 50, 52.
23. Schmidgall, *Literature as Opera*, 17.
24. Ernst Krenek, letter to Alfred Rosenzweig, July 13, 1947. In this letter Krenek made

a number of surmises that Rosenzweig knew to be incorrect. He wrote two long rejoinders, dated September 1, 1947, and April 1, 1948, giving details of Krauss's part in events of 1933 and 1934 as preparations were under way to present *Karl V* in Vienna. Much of the account given here is based on these letters, which are in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

8. ACTIVIST AND ESSAYIST: 1933–1938

1. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 27.
2. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, November 14, 1976.
3. The essay was reprinted in Krenek, *Zur Sprache gebracht*, 175–196.
4. Adorno and Krenek, *Briefwechsel*, 85, 87–88, 89.
5. Ernst Krenek, "Zwischen 'Blubo' und 'Asphalt,'" *Christlicher Ständestaat* 2 (June 2, 1935): 520.
6. *Ibid.*, 521.
7. Quoted in Hans Moldenhauer and Rosaleen Moldenhauer, *Anton von Webern: A Chronicle of His Life and Work* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 346.
8. *Ibid.*, 391.
9. *Ibid.*, 406. Krenek's essay was reprinted in *Zur Sprache gebracht*, 144–148; and (translated) in *Exploring Music*, 79–82. The Moldenhauers, following Webern, erroneously give the title as "Österreich."
10. The minutes are in the music collection of the Vienna City Library.
11. The AKM correspondence for the years of Krenek's presidency is in the Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.
12. Ernst Krenek, "Was erwartet der Komponist von der Musikerziehung?" 23, nos. 26/27 (June 8, 1936): 23–24; reprinted in Adorno and Krenek, *Briefwechsel*, 212.
13. Richard S. Hill, "Schoenberg's Tone-Rows and the Tonal System of the Future," *Musical Quarterly* 22 (January 1936): 14, 16, 34.
14. Krenek, *Exploring Music*, 141. See the next note.
15. The lectures were published as *Über neue Musik* (Vienna: Ringbuchhandlung, 1937); this scarce booklet was reproduced photographically in 1977 by the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft of Darmstadt. The second lecture, "Basic Principles of a New Theory of Musical Aesthetics," was reprinted in *Zur Sprache gebracht*, 257–276; *Exploring Music*, 129–149; and Ernst Krenek, *Im Zweifelsfalle. Aufsätze über Musik* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1984), 163–182. The third, "Atonality," fourth, "The Twelve-Tone Technique" (retitled "Music Under Construction"), and fifth, "Music and Mathematics" (much shortened) may be found in *Music Here and Now*, 141–165, 166–191, and 192–217, respectively.
16. Krenek, *Über neue Musik*, 30; the English version quoted here is from *Exploring Music*, 142–143.
17. Krenek, *Über neue Musik*, 72, 79.
18. *Ibid.*, 88–89.
19. Krenek, *Music Here and Now*, 212.
20. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 29.
21. Confirmed in an interview with the author, Palm Springs, June 6, 1976.
22. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, March 16, 1983.
23. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, December 10, 1976.
24. Andrew Porter, "Not Without Honor," *The New Yorker*, April 30, 1979, 126.
25. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 33.
26. Zenck, *Ernst Krenek*, 177.

27. From entries in Krenek's diary covering this period. Krenek began keeping the diary on October 3, 1937. He entitled it *Die Amerika Reise* and at first made brief entries almost daily. He maintained it in this form through September 17, 1939. There followed a break of three months after which he resumed keeping it on December 18, but in a different form. Now instead of jotting down short daily notes he wrote extended meditative passages modeled, as he said in the first sentence of the first entry, on Julian Green's *Personal Record, 1928–1939*, which had just been published. Thereafter he thought of it not as a diary but as a journal. The care with which many entries are written suggests that he was thinking of eventual publication. On April 28, 1941, after a lapse of slightly more than five months, he shifted from German to English. He ceased with an entry for August 29, 1942, for he had started writing the autobiography now under seal in the Library of Congress (see Chapter 2, note 19). The diary-journal is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

28. John L. Stewart, "Krenek as an Essayist," in *Ernst Krenek*, ed. Otto Kolleritsch (Graz: Universal Edition, 1982), 56.

29. *Ibid.*, 65–66.

9. A MODERNIST IN AMERICA : 1939–1942

1. For a discussion of Kraus's conception of Woman, which both closely resembled and radically differed from Otto Weininger's (and thus from Wedekind's and Berg's depictions of Lulu), see Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, 71–75.

2. Austin Warren, "Kosmos Kafka," *The Southern Review* 7 (1941–1942): 352.

3. Dimitri Mitropoulos, letter to Hans Heinsheimer, October 2, 1938, a copy of which dated October 5, 1938, is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

4. Krenek, *Music Here and Now*, 9.

5. Robert Erickson, letter to Krenek, December 8, 1939; Erickson's letters to Krenek are now in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

6. Robert Erickson, letter to Krenek, February 17, 1940.

7. His letter was published on September 17, 1939.

8. G[eorge] S[herman] Dickinson, letter to Krenek, February 8, 1939; Krenek Archive, UCSD.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Richard Hill, letter to Krenek, March 30, 1939; Krenek Archive, UCSD.

11. Perle's letters to Krenek and copies of Krenek's letters to Perle are in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

12. Ernst Krenek, *Johannes Ockeghem* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1953), 12.

Ockeghem is often spelled "Ockegehem." The man himself commonly omitted the *e*. Krenek, however, usually included it in his references to the composer, as he did in the title of a book he wrote about the composer. But he was not consistent. In the title of an essay on dissonance in the composer's masses, Krenek left it out. Both the book and the essay are discussed in Chapter 10.

13. From a journal entry for July 13, 1941. See also Chapter 8, note 27.

14. From journal entries for August 22 and 23, 1941.

15. From a copy of the memorandum now in the Krenek Archive, UCSD. All details relating to Krenek's disagreement with Dickinson and subsequent difficulties are taken from correspondence between them now in the Archive.

16. The letters the music students at Vassar wrote to Krenek after his dismissal are in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

10. NEW BEGINNINGS: 1942–1949

1. Ernst Krenek, "Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae," in *The Composer's Point of View: Essays on Twentieth-Century Music by Those Who Wrote It*, ed. Robert Stephen Hines (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 22–23.
2. *Ibid.*, 24.
3. Robert Erickson, letter to Krenek, May 16, 1952.
4. Robert Erickson, undated letters to Krenek, the first written sometime in 1941, the second early in 1942.
5. Ernst Krenek, "On the Enjoyment of Music," paper presented at Hamline University, St. Paul, October 5, 1942; a typescript is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
6. Ernst Krenek, "A Composer Teaching," paper presented to the Minnesota Music Teachers Association, Minneapolis, November 2, 1942; a typescript is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
7. Ernst Krenek, "Inspiration in Music," *Bulletin of Hamline University* 33 (January 1943): 5.
8. Robert Erickson, unpublished memoir; the portion concerning Krenek is dated "22 Feb. 1974."
9. Ernst Krenek, "Teaching the Atonal Idiom," *Music Teachers National Association Proceedings* 34 (1940): 312.
10. Erickson, unpublished memoir.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 10, 1977.
13. Erickson, unpublished memoir.
14. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 10, 1977.
15. Ernst Krenek, letter to Adorno, April 9, 1944; in *Briefwechsel*, 143.
16. Dimitri Mitropoulos, letters to Krenek, May 21, 1946; August 14, 1947; December 23, 1947; these and many other letters from Mitropoulos expressing his great affection for and loyalty to Krenek are in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
17. Artur Schnabel, letter to Krenek, November 5, 1945; in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
18. Ernst Krenek, letter to Ross Lee Finney, November 2, 1943; a copy is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
19. Ernst Krenek, letter to Adorno, July 23, 1945; in *Briefwechsel*, 145.
20. Krenek, *Selbstdarstellung*, 48; Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 37.
21. Krenek, "Self-Analysis," 37.
22. The description of Krenek's handling of the twelve-tone row in the Seventh String Quartet relies heavily on an unpublished paper by Michael Staehle entitled "The Treatment of the Row to Form Musical Shape in the Seventh Quartet of Ernst Krenek," written in fulfillment of a requirement for the Ph.D. degree at the University of California, San Diego, in 1988.
23. Ernst Krenek, letter to Carl Bricken, April 3, 1944; Krenek's letters to Bricken are now among the Bricken papers, LC.
24. Ernst Krenek, letter to Bricken, May 6, 1946.
25. Ernst Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 11, 1972; Beverly (Pinsky) Grigsby, interview with the author, La Jolla, California, April 21, 1975.
26. Ernst Krenek, letter to Mitropoulos, January 10, 1948; a copy is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
27. Dimitri Mitropoulos, letter to Krenek, July 22, 1948.

28. Dimitri Mitropoulos, letter to Krenek, December 10, 1948.
29. Artur Schnabel, letter to Krenek, December 15, 1943; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
30. A copy of Piano Sonata no. 6 is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
31. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, February 10, 1977.
32. Erickson, unpublished memoir.
33. Virginia Seay Ploeser, letter to Krenek, July 6, 1949; Krenek Archive, UCSD.

11. ADVENTURES IN SERIALISM: 1950–1970

1. The organization is now called the Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt and has its own building, complete with library and museum. The summer courses are offered biennially in a nearby public school. They are supported not only by the city but also by many sponsors, among whom are music publishers, automobile manufacturers, radio and television stations, and an impressive number of state and city officials.
2. Pierre Boulez, "Schönberg Is Dead," *The Score*, no. 6 (May 1952): 18–21.
3. Emanuela Krenek, letter to Krenek, July 17, 1950; her letters to her son are now in the Krenek Archive, UCSD; his letters to her are in the Krenek Archive, Vienna City Library.
4. Ernst Krenek, letter to Robert J. Burton, Broadcast Music, Inc., May 23, 1953; a carbon copy is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
5. Ernst Krenek, draft of an undated letter to Louis Victor written sometime in the late spring of 1950; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
6. Samuel R. Rosenbaum, letter to Krenek, August 13, 1951; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
7. Hans Heinsheimer, letter to Krenek, October 17, 1950; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
8. David Drew, "The Darmstadt Summer School of New Music, 1954," *The Score and I.M.A. Magazine* 10 (December 1954): 80.
9. Ernst Krenek, interview with Claudia Maurer Zenck, in the *Tages Anzeiger* (West Berlin), August 23, 1980.
10. Wilbur Ogdon, interview with the author, La Jolla, California, July 10, 1975.
11. Harry F. Olson, telegram to Krenek, ca. mid-August 1955; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
12. Ernst Krenek, letter to Robert J. Burton, May 23, 1953.
13. Ernst Krenek, letter to Wladimir Lakond, April 29, 1953; a copy is now in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
14. Maurice Abravanel, letter to Krenek, October 26, 1953; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
15. Dimitri Mitropoulos, letter to Krenek, April 23, 1953.
16. Herbert Eimert, letter to Krenek, July 6, 1954; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
17. Ernst Krenek, "Ein neues Blatt ist aufgeschlagen," *Melos* 21 (November 1954): 305–307.
18. Ernst Krenek, "A Glance over the Shoulders of the Young," *Die Reihe* 1 (1958): 16; the German-language original was published in *Die Reihe* in 1955.
19. Krenek, interview with Zenck, *Tages Anzeiger*.
20. Ernst Krenek, *De rebus prius factis* (Frankfurt: Wilhelm Hansen, 1956), 16.
21. Ernst Krenek, "Extents and Limits of Serial Technique," *The Musical Quarterly* 46 (April 1960): 221.
22. Paul Sacher, letter to Krenek, March 17, 1958; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
23. Krenek, "Extents and Limits of Serial Technique," 215.
24. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, March 2, 1979.
25. First published in 1958 in the proceedings of the Institute, Boulez's "Aléa" was

translated by David Noakes and Paul Jacobs and reprinted in *Perspectives of New Music* 3 (Fall–Winter 1964); the quoted passage appears on page 43.

26. Ibid., 47.

27. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, November 14, 1976.

28. Krenek, “Extents and Limits of Serial Technique,” 226.

29. Karlheinz Stockhausen, “Stockhausen’s Notes on the Works,” in Karl H. Wörner, *Stockhausen: Life and Work*, trans. and ed. Bill Hopkins (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 31.

30. Boulez, “Aléa,” 44.

31. Ernst Krenek, “A Composer’s Influences,” 41.

32. A. F. [Alfred Frankenstein], “Krenek, Ernst, *Sestina for Voice and Instrumental Ensemble*; *Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetae*,” in *Records in Review*, ed. Frances Newbury (Great Barrington, Mass.: Wyeth Press, 1959), 98.

33. Robert Craft, letter to Paul Fromm, May 8, 1958. Knowing that Krenek would be pleased by it, Fromm sent him a thermofax copy, which is now in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

34. Hering’s letter was published in the *Darmstädter Echo* on September 7, 1961; that of Boulez and his colleagues appeared in the *Echo* on September 14, 1961; Krenek’s letter appeared in the *Darmstädter Tagblatt* on November 24, 1961. Adorno’s talk, “Vers une musique informelle,” was published in the *Darmstädter Beiträge zur neuen Musik* 4 (1962): 72–102; it was delivered in German.

35. Herbert Eimert, letter to Krenek, August 8, 1957; Krenek Archive, UCSD.

36. Ernst Krenek, letter to Herbert Eimert; Krenek retained an undated copy, now in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

37. Herbert Eimert, letter to Krenek, September 18, 1957; Krenek Archive, UCSD.

38. Rudolf Kolisch, letter to Krenek, May 24, 1958; Krenek Archive, UCSD.

39. Ernst Krenek, “Komponist und Hörer,” *Musikalische Zeitfragen* 12 (1964): 18. In speaking of the imprecise use of scientific terms Krenek was not calling on his own limited knowledge of science but following an article by a physicist that had appeared in the *Reihe* for 1957.

40. Heinz-Klaus Metzger, “Just Who Is Growing Old?” *Die Reihe* 4 (1958): 78–79.

41. Ernst Krenek, undated letter to Adorno; in *Briefwechsel*, 152.

42. Wilbur Ogdon, interview with the author, La Jolla, California, July 10, 1975.

43. Roger Reynolds, interview with the author, La Jolla, California, October 14, 1974.

44. Krenek, “Self-Analysis,” 6–7.

45. Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 75.

46. Ernst Krenek, draft of a letter to Paul Fromm, December 16, 1963; Krenek Archive, UCSD. We know the letter was sent because Fromm replied to it in a letter dated 18 December 1963, which is also in the Archive.

47. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, March 17, 1972.

48. Ernst Krenek, “Profile of Myself,” February 1960; unpublished radio broadcast now in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

49. Wolfgang Timaeus, letter to Krenek, December 17, 1963; Krenek Archive, UCSD.

50. Ernst Krenek, “Sinn und Unsinn der modernen Music,” *Forum* 2 (April 1955): 152.

51. Gottfried Michael Koenig, “Commentary,” *Die Reihe* 8 (1962): 87.

52. Ernst Krenek, “Serial Music,” 1960; unpublished lecture now in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.

53. Reginald Smith Brindle, *The New Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 52.

54. William Butler Yeats, "The Fascination of What's Difficult," in *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 91–92.
55. Ernst Krenek, "Hol' der Henker eure beiden Häuser," *Forum* 11 (January 1964): 109.
56. Robert Erickson, conversation with the author, La Jolla, California, July 3, 1975.
57. Ernst Krenek, unpublished notes for the Christian Gauss lectures, 1957; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
58. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, December 20, 1984; Ernst Krenek, "Vom Verfall des Einfalls," in *Prisma der gegenwertigen Musik*, ed. Joachim E. Behrendt and Jurgen Uhde (Hamburg: Furche, 1959), 144.

12. THE LATER OPERAS: KRENEK AS LIBRETTIST

1. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, December 10, 1976.
2. Ernst Krenek, "Music and Text: Reflections of a Modern Composer on Lied and Libretto," a talk delivered at Stanford University on May 19, 1979; published in *Jahrbuch des Wiener Goethe-Vereins* 84/85 (1980–1981), 97–104; quoted passage appears on page 99.
3. *Ibid.*, 99.
4. Ernst Krenek, "Is Opera Still Possible Today?" in *Exploring Music*, 99. Originally presented as a talk, "Ist Oper heute noch möglich?" in 1936 and published as an offprint in Vienna in 1937.
5. *Ibid.*, 107, 109.
6. Krenek, interviews with the author, La Jolla, California, April 21, 1972; and Palm Springs, January 14, 1982.
7. Schmidgall, *Literature as Opera*, 10–11.
8. Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 46.
9. Ernst Krenek, letter to Nicolas Slonimsky, February 5, 1938; Krenek papers, LC.
10. Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 37.
11. *Ibid.*, 46.
12. Dimitri Mitropoulos, letter to Krenek, June 30, 1951.
13. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, September 15, 1972.
14. Emanuela Krenek, letters to Krenek, November 3, 1956; and April 12, 1957.
15. Adlai Stevenson, letter to Krenek, January 25, 1957; a copy is in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
16. Dimitri Mitropoulos, letter to Krenek, 10 October 1952.
17. The many secondary meanings of the title were pointed out by Krenek in 1976, when he obligingly annotated the author's translation of the libretto.
18. Ernst Krenek, "Ausgerechnet, aber sehr verspielt," *Forum* 9 (November 1962): 467–470; reprinted in *Im Zweifelsfalle*, 66–72.
19. Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 56.
20. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, September 6, 1972.
21. From an unidentified clipping in the possession of the author.
22. Rolf Liebermann's letters to Krenek and Krenek's copies of his letters to Liebermann are in the Krenek Archive, UCSD.
23. Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 37.
24. Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1906), 253, 260.
25. Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, 74.

26. Krenek, "Alban Berg's 'Lulu,'" in *Exploring Music*, 116.
27. Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 39.

13. INTIMATIONS OF MORTALITY AND A LATE HARVEST: 1970–1984

1. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, May 18, 1986. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, letter to Krenek, February 8, 1970; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
2. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, letter to Krenek, November 29, 1971; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
3. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, letter to Krenek, July 20, 1972; Krenek Archive, UCSD.
4. Ernst Krenek, letter to Friedrich Sartor, January 19, 1974; quoted in Ernst Krenek, *Katalog zur Ausstellung*, ed. Ernst Hilmar (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1982), 41.
5. Ernst Krenek, letter to Friedrich Sartor, December 2, 1976; quoted in *ibid.*, 42.
6. Krenek, interviews with the author, Palm Springs, March 17 and May 19, 1972; and December 20, 1984.
7. Ernst Krenek, letter to the author, June 19, 1978.
8. This and other quotations from *Spätlese* follow Krenek's own translation closely but not precisely.
9. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 370–371.
10. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, May 18, 1986.
11. Robert Hughes, "In London: A Visionary Maestro," *Time*, July 21, 1986, 69.
12. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, May 1, 1975.
13. Quoted in Martin Zenck, "Die Ungleichzeitigkeit des Neuen," in *Ernst Krenek. Musik-Konzepte* 39/40, ed. Metzger and Richn, 102.
14. [Ernst Krenek and Claudia Maurer Zenck], "Der verletzliche Komponist," in *Ernst Krenek*, ed. Kolleritsch, 27.
15. Krenek, interview with the author, Palm Springs, November 14, 1976.
16. Krenek, interviews with the author, Palm Springs, February 2, 1973; and November 26, 1976.
17. Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 88–89.
18. Krenek, *Exploring Music*, 84.

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